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Transcription of hand-written letter from Mary Townsend Seymour to Mary Ovington on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1919

420 New Britain Ave.

Hartford, Conn.

April 21<sup>st</sup>, 1919

My dear Miss Ovington –

Am enclosing Miss Milholland answer to my letter of March 15<sup>th</sup> –

I have not received any word as yet from Miss Paul – asking her to make a public denial of her alleged statement. Since Miss Milholland's letter reached – Monday of this week – have sent Miss Paul a second letter urging her further to declare herself publicly. Will you write Mrs. M. Toscan Bennett, 22 Forest Street who is a member of our Branch executive board N.A.A.C.P. and is a woman who does not know the meaning of the word expediency -- and is very near Miss Paul – was a picket and stands firmly on the Negro getting a square deal a near friend of Miss Milholland too – Also, Mrs. Thomas N. Hepburn, 352 Laurel St. – who is chairman of the

Connecticut Branch of the Executive Board of the Woman's Party – a Southern woman – very democratic in some things – but not to be trusted too far on the Negro question She is a politician in every sense of the word.

Mrs. Edward Porritt – 63 Tremont St. a splendid type of Englishwoman – who was instrumental in placing me on the Health and Recreation Committee of the State Council representing the N.A.A.C.P. and is now --- tho' the council is fast being dissolved by our Legislature – being reorganized and will continue as a committee under another name now under consideration –. Through this committee we have been able to get two Negro representatives for girls work on a city recreation program which is being worked out – and for which an appropriation has been granted in City's budget within the month – also – in the House Service work -- we have seen the dire need of a visiting nurse for months and have finally gotten one of our girls appointed.

Miss Susan N. Upshur – a Hartford girl - educated in our schools – graduate of Mercy Hospital – Philadelphia, Pa – 1915 – Miss Arnold – who is acting secretary for our Branch – our Secretary – whom it has seemed - has never taken the interest in our work– We would have been glad to have her – having gone to Boston for short period – everything being left to us who know that the work must be done–

Miss Arnold has been and is a great help – everything has since-our president- Mr. Bell went overseas – been on my shoulders - and I do hope you realize all that it must mean – to fight in silence – hatred and petty jealousies – pitting against all such -- uphill work that counts with telling results–

The Association is so dear to me – my people altho’ they do not always understand – cannot afford – now – at any rate – as never before – to lose a worker – so discouraging tho’ it often becomes – your love and untiring devotion is a constant incentive to help me in every way I can in this great work –

At our luncheon at the Allyn House the day the “Prison Special” came through. In pledging - I said “I pledge five dollars in the name of the Hartford Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People – urging that the Susan B. Anthony Amendment without compromise be allowed to stand. “Miss Mabel Vernon – National Secretary who was asking for pledges – stopped the confusion by clapping her hands and said – “I want you all to hear this pledge - ! “asked me to repeat it – which I was very glad to have the opportunity to do – very slowly – with emphasis – for I realized full well what the quibbling of these woman would mean at this crucial time --to our women of the South who already are

suffering more than they can easily bear. There was great applause – really more than any other at the meeting and hundreds were pledged. I had scarcely sat down - when Miss Sue White of Tennessee jumped to her feet – bubbling over with enthusiasm and waiting for the applause to cease- she said – “As a Southern woman I give endorsing that pledge!” Lucy Branham followed with the same sort of pledge – altho’ hers had not the same ring of sincerity as did Miss Whites’ –

Miss (Mabel) Vernon said – “We need money – lots of it – to educate public sentiment – to make that possible – but we can do it!”

After the luncheon I found Miss White and talked with her a few minutes – she is very frank and fearless – she said she knew numbers of white women in the South who believes as she does but do not dare express their views – She told me one thing that I could heartily agree with – “She knew when the black women of the South got the vote they were going to use it to better advantage – as far as their race was concerned than the colored men had – in all these years --. That of course – opened various lines of thought – but knowing the white women feel the same way about their own use of the ballot in comparison with the use of the ballot [by] their men -- I could but appreciate the thought -- you will see [this] circular – did they not use them in New York? And I saw but two here.

Will you kindly return Miss Milholland's letter when you have finished with it.

Hoping you are real well – and I have made this situation clear as far as I know.

I am very truly yours

Mary T. Seymour.

P.S. Do not hesitate, dear Miss Ovington – to call on me at any time to do whatever you may see fit.

M.