

The Case for abolishing the police (1): the presenters

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [George Floyd killing](#) October 16, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts in the wake of the George Floyd murder* 

The 2020 NCC Peace and Social Justice Conference

Police-Free Future panel, October 15, 2020 video

The murder of George Floyd initiated (another) national reckoning with race. Cities around the country are or should be examining how they do public safety as part of that national reckoning with race.

Gadfly has been trying to school himself on the various ideas in the wind (and sometimes on the table) regarding reimagining police departments.

Some of it he gets, some he doesn't.

The idea of a police-free future (a less immediately confrontational term than "abolishing the police"!) is one of the ideas he doesn't get.

What can people possibly mean by abolishing the police?

Gadfly'll bet that many followers have asked the same question in a kind of bewilderment.

So he was very interested in this panel at the NCC "Peace and Social Justice" conference on Wednesday (video link above).

And Gadfly will take a post or two or three to make the case for abolishing the police as he understood it from attending the panel presentation.

Let's see what we think about it.

First, though, about the panel members:

The presenters were out-of-towner Peter VanKoughnett of **MPD150** and the ever more familiar Ashleigh Strange of **Lehigh Valley Stands Up**. Peter is from Minneapolis — George Floyd ground-zero — and his organization title refers to the 150-year history of the **Minneapolis Police Department**.

“MPD150 is a community-based initiative challenging the narrative that police exist to protect and serve. MPD150 is a participatory, horizontally-organized effort by local organizers, researchers, artists, and activists to shift the discussion around police and policing in Minneapolis from one of procedural reforms to one of meaningful structural change. It is not the project of any organization. We stand on the shoulders of the work that many organizations have been doing for years, and welcome the support of everyone who agrees with our approach. We hope that the process we are developing will help organizers in other cities establish practical abolitionist strategies.”

MPD150 is

- shifting the discussion from police reforms to structural change
- developing practical abolitionist strategies

“The purpose of MPD150 is to change the story of policing in Minneapolis in order to set in motion a process for dissolving the Minneapolis Police Department.”



“Lehigh Valley Stands Up (LVSU) is a grassroots organization formed by leaders throughout the Lehigh Valley. Together we will build a multi-racial working class force for transformative political change in the Lehigh Valley, making a difference on issues and in elections in the years ahead.”

“We are focused on holding our elected and appointed leaders accountable for their actions and exposing corruption in every level of government. We want to divest from institutions that have harmed our communities and invest in equitable solutions that will benefit everyone.”

to be continued . . .