

NCC interview with Justan Parker (3)

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [George Floyd killing](#) October 30, 2020

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

The 2020 NCC Peace and Social Justice Conference

October 13-15

Black Lives Matter panel video

Remember that we are taking our time to listen to the guy who created Black Lives Matter Lehigh Valley (not affiliated with the national organization).

Since GeorgeFloyd Gadfly has been trying to see the world through the eyes of those who feel aggrieved by the police. For understanding. For empathy.

Gadfly asks that you listen to the audio clips to gain a sense of the person that tone gives.

Remember too that the Gadfly text is just quick paraphrase and summary, not exact transcription.

Did you have an encounter with the counter-protestors? Did you have a confrontation or even a peaceful interaction? (5 mins.)

There was a counter-protest in Pen Argyl, and it was hard not to have an emotional response to them. Because they don't like your skin color or believe that you have any value. They believe that black lives do not matter. It's hard. In Allentown there was a counter-protest on the other side of City Hall. We tried to start a conversation with some of them, but "a protest is not the place for that." Emotions and feelings are too high. At Emmaus there were two men with rifles. "Why are we bringing rifles to a park with children?" I'm not against gun rights, but "what is the

point” of that? A means of intimidation. A fear tactic. In my eyes that’s the Klan. That’s what Black and Brown people equate it to. The Klan. Counter-protests are very often populated by people outside the community. Some people equate protest with deviance. In Palmerton there was a lot of online agitation about Antifa and etc. I’m not part of any of that. People try to get you in an a-ha moment. So that’s not the time and place for us to engage with them.

Audio Player not available in this archive

**What advice do you have for people who want to get involved?
First-time activists, maybe afraid. (2 mins.)**

The great thing is that there are many lanes to run in, many ways to participate. Actual protesting, sharing live-stream on social media, writing to elected official. Activism isn’t restricted to protesting. Activism comes in many forms.

**Did you have the experience of first-time people feeling
empowered? (2 mins.)**

Yes, we have the experience of people having an epiphany during discussion of defunding and etc., walking away feeling better, and then communicating with others. But some people left the Palmerton protest feeling broken from the counter-protestors. The racism, the violence. You can see in the pictures a girl physically scared and children crying. A great amount of hate out there, and that was accepted by the police.