

Implicit Bias or Outright Racism?

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Racism is alive and well in Benicia

Racism is part of American history and all too prevalent in both Benicia and California. Why is it important to acknowledge that? Without seeing a problem there is no way to correct it. Much as some people and some political parties want to deny that racism exists, it is alive and well. The Benicia Black Lives Matter website has many moving testimonies about experiences of racism in Benicia. Recently several Black youths were threatened near Raley's, by a white male driving a pickup truck, holding a realistic fake gun. I will never be able to forget a city council meeting where a Black resident related her experience walking down First Street and being told to go back to Vallejo.



Racism takes many forms, both explicit and implicit. Sometimes it's hard to tell the difference. In an East Bay Times article on May 2 titled No. 1 Terror Target there was a great graph that showed how many people were killed in deadly attacks since 9/11 by people with different ideologies. Those with right-wing ideology had killed the most, but the photos in the story painted a picture that was at odds with the graph. Of the three photos in the article, one was of a far-left wing extremist. A total of 1 person had been killed by people with that ideology. One was of a black woman from the Black Liberation Army. A total of 12 people had been killed by those with that ideology. The group that had killed the most people, 114, far right-wing ideology, was not shown at all in the photos. Is this implicit bias or just outright racism?

If we want to eliminate racism from our society, we need to identify it and learn about it first. One great way to do that is to attend workshops where you can interact with others and do in depth reading and watching of videos that teach about the history of racism in this country. I recently attended a series of workshops put on by [SURG Bay Area \(Showing Up for Racial Justice\)](http://surjbayarea.org). Please check out their website at surjbayarea.org for more information about how we can all work to overcome racism, and to sign up for workshops.

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