

## Challenging antisemitism and Islamophobia

Many young people in Britain today report bullying based on race and religion. Many Israelis and Palestinians also experience hatred because of their identity.



Photo: The Faith & Belief Forum

### Antisemitism

Antisemitism is hatred directed towards Jewish people. It is a very old form of racism, with specific myths and lies that get repeated. Jews have been persecuted as a minority in many countries, and sometimes governments and laws promote discrimination and violence against them.

Historically, antisemitism in Europe goes back hundreds of years. King Edward I expelled the Jews from England. They were targeted (alongside Muslims) during the Spanish Inquisition. Jews were confined to ghettos in European cities in the 16th and 17th centuries, as in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. There were periodic pogroms (organised massacres) in various countries. More recently, the Holocaust in Nazi-controlled Europe saw six million Jews murdered. Antisemitism is cyclical in nature, with periods of quiet followed by outbreaks of discrimination and violence.

Even though Jews can have many different ethnic backgrounds, a stereotypical image of a bearded Eastern European is often used to represent all Jews.

Blaming all Jews for the violent actions of an Israeli or the Israeli government is one form of antisemitism, but there are others you can learn to identify (see the accompanying slideshow).



Equaliteach event

### Islamophobia

Islamophobia is hatred towards Muslims or people seen as Muslim. The Christian Crusaders in the Middle Ages went to war with Muslims, and created many myths that survive today.

In modern times, a Palestinian scholar called Edward Said came up with the term "orientalism" to describe the way Muslims, Arabs and other Asian people are stereotyped in Western art and literature.

Blaming and punishing all Muslims for terrorism is one of the most common forms of Islamophobia. Particularly during the "war on terror", which was announced after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, Muslims have faced increased surveillance, stigmatisation and violence in many countries. In 2017 the USA brought in what President Trump called a "Muslim ban" on immigration from certain majority-Muslim countries.

In 2018 a letter was anonymously circulated in London promoting a "Punish a Muslim Day". It contained suggestions for violent acts like removing a woman's headscarf and beating Muslims.

## RESOURCE 33-A

### Discuss:

- What are the myths about Jews and Muslims?
- Can you think of examples?
- How can we challenge these forms of racism?

### For more on these issues, we recommend:

- *Faith in us* from Equaliteach
- Facing History & Ourselves UK
- The Faith & Belief Forum

### Examine these images

- What feelings and ideas are they trying to convey about Jews and Muslims?



A. "The Eternal Jew", an antisemitic cartoon from Nazi Germany.



B. A cartoon from Saudi Arabia during Barack Obama's re-election campaign for President of the USA in 2008.



C. A Daily Mail cartoon from 2015 showing rats crossing the European border alongside Muslim refugees.