

PATRIOTISM/NATIONALISM NOTES FOR INSPIRE DISCUSSION CIRCLE

1. Are you proud to be British? Or do you identify more with your social class, gender, place where you live, ethnic group or religion?
2. Karl Marx had the view that working class people who had very little power, and had little in common with the ruling class, should identify themselves with working class people in other countries rather than favouring patriotism.
3. What do you think is the difference between patriotism and nationalism?
4. George Orwell famously said that “nationalism is the worst enemy of peace. According to him nationalism is the feeling that one’s country is superior to another in all respects, while patriotism is merely a feeling of admiration for a way of life.
5. Perhaps the most extreme example of nationalism in this country is the English Defence League. Some excerpts from their Mission statement are:- “We stand for the right of English people to their own country over and above people from elsewhere”, and “we are proud of English culture.... We expect migrants to the UK to live in harmony with English culture”.
6. What sort of people do we think are attracted to the EDL? And conversely what sort of people are tolerant of those with different ethnicities, cultures and religions who choose to make the UK their home?
7. Research into the supporters of the EDL shows that most are young, male and tend to be unemployed. They appear to share pessimistic concerns about the UK’s future, worries about immigration and poor job prospects, and a strong antipathy towards Islam.

8. Do you feel we need legislation banning far right groups, or are there other ways we can discourage people from joining them, or holding such divisive views?b