



Political Paranoia: The Psychopolitics of Hatred

Robert S. Robins, Dr. Jerrold Post M.D.

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Paranoia is not an obscure mental state afflicting some individuals but a widespread condition of modern societies, say the authors of this book. Robert S. Robins and Jerrold M. Post, M.D., document and interpret the malign power of paranoia in a variety of contexts - in political movements like McCarthyism, in organizations like the John Birch Society, in leaders like Hitler, Stalin, Pol Pot, Jim Jones, and David Koresh, and among extreme groups that commit violence in the name of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Indeed, Robins and Post show that paranoid dynamic has been aggressively present in every social disaster of this century. Robins and Post describe the paranoid personality, explain why paranoia is part of human evolutionary history, and examine the conditions that must exist before the message of the paranoid takes root in a vulnerable population, leading to mass movements and genocidal violence. Their wide-ranging discussion sheds lights on many troubling episodes in our history: why more than 900 people committed suicide in Guyana in 1978 with their leader, Jim Jones; how the terrorists who bombed New York's World Trade Centre in New York in 1993 justified their violence in the name of God; how the need for enemies in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet empire led to a rise in anti-Semitism in some eastern European countries even though the Jewish population had been nearly decimated; how paranoia manifests itself among black and white racists; and why the conspiracy theory elaborated in Oliver Stone's film JFK strikes such a chord in the viewing public.

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