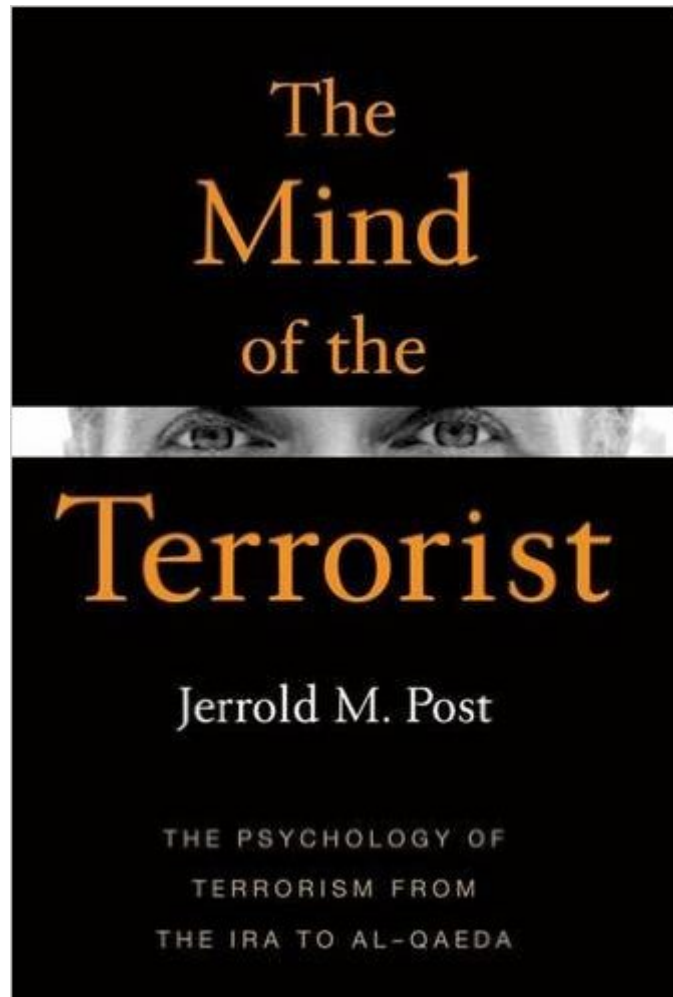


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# The Mind Of The Terrorist: The Psychology Of Terrorism From The IRA To Al-Qaeda



## Synopsis

In contrast to the widely held assumption that terrorists are crazed fanatics, Jerrold Post demonstrates they are psychologically "normal" and that "hatred has been bred in the bone". He reveals the powerful motivations that drive these ordinary people to such extraordinary evil by exploring the different types of terrorists, from national-separatists such as the Irish Republican Army to social revolutionary terrorists such as the Shining Path, as well as religious extremists like al-Qaeda and Aum Shinrikyo. In *The Mind of the Terrorist*, Post uses his expertise to explain how the terrorist mind works and how this information can help us to combat terrorism more effectively.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Although largely well written, the book mostly focuses on the history of various terror groups rather than a deeper review of their psychopathology. Mostly the psychological aspects are referred to in recurring themes. The reason for a rating of two, however, is the asinine notion that since Moses, according to the Book of Exodus, was the deliverer of the Jews from Egypt and that the plagues supposedly orchestrated by him make Moses the first bioterrorist. Sorry, but that is just a bit much. Furthermore in the tactics old and new section the author confuses biowarfare with bioterrorism. Lastly, in the main text the author could do more to emphasise the scope of strategic intent of the various terror groups more clearly. Thus the author could more effectively show the national ambitions of some groups and the global megalomania of others. "Understanding Terror Networks" by Marc Sageman, although dryer, is a far more effective expenditure of time and money.

if you are looking for a book that will alarm you and justify your own prejudices against certain groups of terrorists, this book is not for you. if you are genuinely seeking an objective analysis of the cognitions and emotions of terrorists, then this is a very good summary analysis of different types of terrorism based on motivation. the writing style is somewhat dry, most of the time. however, he offers very good, cogent insights. he makes sincere efforts to reach out and better comprehend the underlying psyche of the terrorist, so that inroads might be made in reducing the threat of terrorism in the world today. prone to pontificate, i wouldn't recommend this book for those with a closed mind or those not used to this style. for those who want to read one of the very finest texts on psychological understanding of terrorism, this is highly recommended. i give it an "A+". for interested readers, post's book on clinton and hussein is also revealing and fascinating - although dry.

Good information but obviously ignored by our planners. There isn't a soap box big enough to convince the American people to listen to this. Nice to know but makes very little difference since it will be ignored.

If you read about terrorism and conflict, then this book is not that original. But the author has managed, through the stories of various terrorist groups, to bring in one book a lot of subjects on the issue of why people become terrorists. And he does it in a simple and easy to understand way so that the reader can realize and comprehend this phenomenon. My only problem with the book, as with many books, articles, seminars etc on terrorism is that there is no focus on state sponsored terrorism, and the use of terrorists as a means for political goals from established regimes. Also, the book does not really enter the "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter." There are some mentions of the Israeli terrorists in the years before the country's independence, but there is no mention of terrorism as a war tactic. And maybe that is correct, because I think it is a totally different subject. The book is from 2007 so there are no mentions to ISIS and their more aggressive form of terrorism. Still, themes that are covered in the book can be applied to ISIS and the reader might understand why people become ISIS fighters and wives. The ways to deal with modern terrorism are interesting and a little more exploration of the ideas would be interesting. Like many books on the subject, this is not one without faults. But it is the subject of terrorism that is so controversial. So read this book with an open mind and strip yourself from your ideas and norms for a while in order to better understand terrorists.

Jerrold Post's "The Mind of the Terrorist" provided an illuminating look into the mind of the leaders of several terrorist organizations...several of which including Shining Path, The Red Brigades, and The Red Army Faction I was previously unaware of. Although no terrorist can be perfectly painted into a box, Post is able to create some common themes : Most terrorists had experienced some sort of severe shaping childhood loss, many of them have grown up in minority groups within states that are treated unjustly by the ruling majority group such as the LTTE and The IRA. This perceived injustice provides a fertile ground for recruitment among the native marginalized populations. Many groups have risen up 1. as a rejection of their parents generation, 2. As a social revolutionary organization to dethrone the Western Capitalist order of things, 3. To address generations of injustice or 4. Because God or some other religious doctrine has told them to kill x group for y reason. The typical terrorist leader also has a sizeable ego and may rely on charismatic factors or propaganda or sheer brute force to gain recruits to the cause. The second part of the book switches from the leaders of terrorist organizations to those who join terrorist organizations. Paying particular attention to Islamist terrorists, Post draws a picture of a world full of weak governments with little hope for employment or a future for their young populations. In this environment with unchecked avenues for the dissemination of Islamic radical propaganda, terrorists have a ready supply of young people who easily fall prey to these religious ideas of hatred for another because they don't have anything else to believe in. Post gives a stirring picture of both several terrorist leaders and the profile of the type of people they seek to recruit to their cause in an accessible 257 page format.

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