

intentions of the Serbs cannot be ascertained because of international intervention. There are sixteen such episodes in Table 1, characterized as politicides with communal victims.

**Revolutionary** mass murder, another type of politicide, was relatively common during the Cold War. In these instances new regimes committed to bringing about fundamental social, economic and political change sought to eliminate those seen as blocking the path of revolutionary progress. The victims sometimes included cadres who lacked revolutionary zeal (in Cambodia), rich peasants and landowners (in China and North Vietnam), and supporters and former officials of old regimes. Marxist-Leninist regimes which came to power through protracted armed struggles provide most of the post-1945 examples. The Nazis' treatment of political opponents after 1932 and the Iranian revolutionaries' persecution of Baha'is and Mujahidin in the 1980s suggest that politicide is a common consequence of revolutions irrespective of their ideological foundations.

The least common type of politicides is **retributive** mass murder. In these cases subordinate or opposition groups seize power and kill their former masters/oppressors in an act of vengeance. Examples are the Hutu rulers killing their former Tutsi masters in Rwanda (1963-64) and the Pinochet regime's retaliation against leftist supporters of socialist President Allende in the 1970s. The latter is an example of counter-revolutionary politicide, carried out by conservative forces in retaliation against the quasi-revolutionary policies of their predecessors. Kosovo in 1999 provides a recent example in which the former victims of ethnic cleansing have murdered and terrorized Serbs who remained in Kosovo. The presence of NATO forces and UN police has kept the attacks from escalating into a retributive genocide.

Some general observations can be offered about the victims of these episodes. Genocidal victims are most often minorities whose cultures are sharply distinct from the dominant group. The victims of politicide, by contrast, typically have either long-standing aspirations of independent nationhood or are members of groups actively opposing existing regimes. It is sometimes argued that communal membership is the underlying reason for oppositional activity. Certainly this was not the case of the Jews and Roma prior to the Holocaust. Jewish national consciousness prior to the Holocaust was barely an issue in Western Europe; Zionism had gained little support among Western European Jews. The Nazis did not persecute Jews because of their political activities, but because Nazi ideology excluded them as undesirables from the dominant group.

It may be difficult to ascertain whether or not persecution leads to national consciousness and the desire to break away from the dominant group or vice versa; usually repression and resistance reinforce one another in an ascending spiral. The case of Kurds in Turkey and Iraq illustrates the spiral of repression and resistance. Kurds have fought periodic wars for independence since the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in 1919. They are a people with a distinct history and language and live in a geographically contiguous area now part of five different states. In the turbulent years after World War I, which saw the formation of many Middle Eastern states, the Kurds had neither the international support nor the good luck to become an independent state. Kurdish nationalism was and is well developed. The relentless pursuit of their national aspirations accounts for much of their present status as a persecuted minority. As individuals Kurds have had the option to work within the political establishments of Turkey, Iraq, and Iran and many have chosen to do so.