BOOK REVIEW:

Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity

[D.L. Shelton, ed. 2005. 3 vols. Macmillan Reference USA.
Farmington Hills, MI: Thomson Gale. 1458 pp. $345.]

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When Israel Charny edited ABC-CLIO's 2-volume, 720-page *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity* in 1999, it was not clear that such an extensive work was needed by the field, or that it would be welcome. Although admirable in containing contributions from about 100 contributors and forewords by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Simon Wiesenthal, the two-volume set was a little too detailed at times and was somewhat cumbersome to use. Now, in its third printing, the work has found both its place and its stride. Despite its flaws, the encyclopedia fills a void and is appreciated by scholars in the field.

So when a second encyclopedia—one with double the page count and almost double the price of the *Encyclopedia of Genocide*—was released last year, I was concerned that Macmillan Reference was being redundant. That concern has been allayed admirably. Dinah L. Sheldon of George Washington Law School, along with board editors Howard Adelman, Frank Chalk, Alexandre Kiss, and William Schabas, has succeeded in producing the most comprehensive and simple-to-use encyclopedia yet on the subject of genocide. The three-volume set contains 350 entries, 250 illustrations, an outline of contents, cross-references, a glossary, a primary source appendix and a subject index, a filmography section, and multiple legal and judicial decisions (e.g. UN General Assembly Resolution on Genocide, Amistad, etc.). Its alphabetically arranged headings from A (Advertising) to Z (Zunghars) are divided into 13 sections: biographies, crime and punishment, cultural representations, history, Holocaust biographies, instruments, international and national laws, international institutions, investigations and evidence, people, prevention and reaction, reparations, and theories and explanations.

The encyclopedia is intended for general readers with a high school or college level education (preface vii), but only the most sophisticated high shool student would appreciate this text, which at times reads like a Who's Who of genocide scholarship: Robert Jan van Pelt on Auschwitz, Michael Marrus on multiple aspects of the Holocaust, Fred Schweitzer on Anti-Semitism, Ben Kiernan on Pol Pot, Dennis Papazian and Vahakn Dadrian on the

Armenians, Nechama Tec on rescuing, John Roth on philosophical under-pinnings, Robert Melson on comparative genocide, and William Schabas and Dinah Shelton on law.

The latter topic is decidedly the leaning of the encyclopedia, which raises some questions. It is not that legal, judicial crimes against humanity and social justice are not subjects pivotal to the study of genocide. But one wonders what the emphasis might have been if, for example, a sociologist or social scientist were making editorial decisions.

One wonders why, in a master reference work on genocide, the fairly extensive empirical research on prejudice is missing, and why the field of hate studies and hate crimes has become the poor stepchild, excluded from genocide studies per se. At the same time, genocide scholarship works—including those by Staub, Browning, and Bartov—were not routinely cited or emphasized. Conspicuous by omission too are the Sassoon Center/SICSA Hebrew University scholars Wistrich, Bauer, and Volovici. This presentation makes it appear as if all three scholar groups—genocide, hate studies, Holocaust—have nothing in common.

The failure to overlap these fields may explain the omission of entries by theologians such as Franklin Littell. Choosing to use a decision theorist (K.R. Monroe) to explain psychology rather than to amplify her area of expertise—altruism—is also intriguing.

Sometimes there are outright mistakes—unchecked statements such as, "Psychological study of the so-called altruistic personality has not turned up anything remarkable" (p. 139). Such statements may not have been vetted, and, if they were, no contrasting literature was cited. All this may be nitpicking. The tome contains almost 1,500 pages; there are bound to be errors and omissions. There are also unexpected topics, such as Infanticide, Banality of Radical Evil, and the David Irving libel trial, all of which are well-written, as are the entries in general.

Most encyclopedias are not page-turners. They will sit on the shelf and be available in times of need. You want them to be clear and precise. Shelton's *Encyclopedia* is one up from that: it is not only available and well-written, but is also interesting.