Weekly Worksheet.

Michael Bess, “Choices Under Fire: Nuremberg Trials”

Dear scholars,

Welcome to the Bess Worksheet. I want to give you some mid-semester feedback. My hope with the worksheet was to help encourage you to do the reading while providing you with some suggestions as for what to look for in the text.

But instead of turning to the PDFs for answers, many members of our classroom community are turning to the group chat. One person shares the answers, and then dozens of others copy down the answers to the worksheet and turn it in for points.

I want you to know that I consider sharing answers on the group chat a violation of academic honesty. When you share answers, you rob your colleagues of the opportunity to engage with the text. Ultimately this diminishes the chance for their lives to be transformed.

So two things. First, I am asking each of you to no longer post any answers on the group chat. For those of you who have questions about the text, great! Write those questions down and ask them in class! Then we can fuel for our discussion. I will include time for questions.

Second, I am committed to making final questions on future worksheets connect to a personal experience or opinion. This, I hope, will me understand which of you have done the reading yourself and given it some thought.

In closing, let me underscore again that these worksheets—like everything in this class—are optional. If you do not have time to do the reading and reflection, just move on and carve out time to do the next one.

**Worksheet questions:**

1. What were the Nuremberg Trials? What does Bess suggest were the reasons that the US, Britain, and USSR chose to conduct trials instead of summary executions? Of these reasons, which do you think were more important, and why?

2. What were some of the problems with the trial? Which aspects of the trial were legally ambiguous if not morally ambiguous?

3. Bess makes the case that the US leaders of the trial had honest moral hopes with the trials (alongside practical political goals). Do you see moral concerns as normal in US history or as a rarity? What sources inform that belief? (eg high school history class, tv, documentaries, parents’ discussions). Give me some detail here (eg parents say x but documentaries say y).

4. Michael Bess brings up the point that the leader of the Unit 731 project was received an immunity deal during the trials? What were the conditions of that immunity? How does Bess feel about the deal? What is a more recent (eg last ten years) example from US politics of a deal of questionable morality? And which (the Unit 731 case or your own) do you think was more justifiable? Why?