Background Research Worksheet

Book Selection: The Boy in the Striped Pajamas

Author: John Boyne

Instructions: For each question, respond in one or more paragraphs of at least four complete sentences. Include supporting facts and details from your research in each response. Provide the sources for your supporting research.

Using support from your research materials, identify and explain any political, social, economic, or cultural issues that may shape the story.

 The Boy in Striped Pajamas is set during World War II, in Germany. In this time period, Germany’s unemployment rate dropped significantly because those that were unemployed were told to work in the German Military. Despite the improvements, Germany’s debt piled up and was going under an economic depression. Politicians blamed Jews and German commandants had to administer brutal laws against them. This might have affected the plot, as Bruno’s father is has an important position in Nazi Germany. He is a German Commandant, and that might have contributed to why the family had to move.

Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_economy#Germany> and <http://www.history.ucsb.edu/projects/holocaust/Research/Proseminar/romaholocast.htm>

Imagine what it would be like to live in this situation. Using supporting details from your research, discuss the greatest challenges people might face under these circumstances.

 I would be just like Bruno: curious, confused, and even angry. I would keep on asking questions and try to figure out even a basic overview of what to do. I would feel helpless and hopeless about the situation, and may consider revolting against the system. I may not know who is my friend and who is my foe.

Sources: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/indoctrinating-youth>

Based on your research, describe how these circumstances would affect a person’s identity development (crisis, commitment, diffusion,  foreclosure, moratorium, achievement).

  These events would significantly impact identity development by crisis. Amidst the malignant and malevolent situation, it is difficult to get a clear understanding of what is the right decision to do. A wrong choice can lead to terrible consequences. It would hard to even know who to trust and who not to trust. In these scenarios, people were forced betrayed their own people just for the wellbeing for themselves or for the sake of the circumstances.

Sources: <http://www.history.ucsb.edu/projects/holocaust/Research/Proseminar/romaholocast.htm> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_economy#Germany>

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