OPTION B: “Hollywood's Connections with Nazi Germany”

A controversial new book by Harvard scholar Ben Urwand claims that Hollywood movie studios agreed to the demands of the Nazis and even collaborated with them. “The studio executives wanted to preserve business in Germany all through the 1930s,” says the author. “So they invited the Nazi German consul in Los Angeles to their studios and showed him pictures that could be considered potentially offensive to Germany, and they would allow him to make cuts to their pictures.”

The Nazis, according to Urwand, could also prevent movies from being made. He claims a Hollywood film about Hitler was never produced because of Nazi pressure. The film’s original idea came from the great Hollywood screenwriter, Herman Mankiewicz, who also wrote the script for the legendary Citizen Kane – for some, the greatest movie ever made. Mankiewicz had a script about Hitler’s treatment of the Jews. According to Urwand, the Nazi German consul told studio executives that if any studio made this picture, then all of the Hollywood studios would be banned from the German market.

Steven Ross, Professor of History at USC, sees the studios’ alliance with the Nazis as understandable. He claims that studios were primarily business companies and, therefore, although they were run by Jews, they put their business interests before Judaism. “And it all has to be understood in the context of the times,” says historian Thomas Doherty. He observes that in the 1930s, the Nazis had not become the universal symbol for absolute evil they are today, “so, to condemn producers for negotiating with the Nazis, to my mind, lacks historical perspective.”

I * COMPREHENSION (4 points: questions 1-3, 1 point each; 4-5, 0.5 points each)

1. Were German authorities able to manipulate Hollywood movies? Explain.
2. Why does Prof. Ross consider the studios’ agreement with the Nazis understandable?
3. Nowadays we shouldn’t condemn Hollywood producers for dealing with the Nazis. Why?

ARE THESE STATEMENTS TRUE OR FALSE? JUSTIFY YOUR ANSWERS WITH THE PRECISE WORDS OR PHRASES FROM THE TEXT, OR USE YOUR OWN WORDS.

4. The Nazis managed to stop the filming of Citizen Kane.
5. The Nazi consul threatened to exclude all Hollywood studios from the German market.

II * USE OF ENGLISH (3 points; questions 6-9, 0.25 points each; 10-13, 0.5 points each)

6. FIND IN THE TEXT ONE OPPOSITE FOR “allowed” (verb).
7. GIVE A NOUN WITH THE SAME ROOT AS “beautiful” (adjective).
8. WHICH WORD IS NOT AN ADJECTIVE? larger / thicker / baker / earlier
9. FIND IN THE TEXT THE WORD WHICH HAS THE FOLLOWING DEFINITION: “something that is morally wrong, bad or harmful.”
10. GIVE A QUESTION FOR THE UNDERLINED WORDS: “Paul goes to the movies once a month.”
11. REWRITE THE SENTENCE CORRECTLY: “You shouldn’t tell the secret anybody.”
12. FILL IN THE GAP WITH THE CORRECT FORM OF THE VERB IN BRACKETS. “Don’t forget ...... (take) your umbrella!”
13. TURN THE FOLLOWING SENTENCE INTO THE ACTIVE VOICE: “Those medicines should be prescribed only by doctors.”

III * PRODUCTION (3 points)

14. WRITE A COMPOSITION OF APPROXIMATELY 120 WORDS ABOUT THE PROPOSED TOPIC AND FOCUS STRICTLY ON IT:

What are your favourite free time activities?