The novel by Sinclair Lewis was written in the 1930s when fascist movements had achieved power in Germany and Italy. Fascism was also popular in the U.S. However, most Americans believed, at the time and still do today, that a fascist movement could not take power here. Lewis was not so sure. The novel is about a fascist movement taking power in America and its consequences for American institutions and for the American people.

Questions to answer in paper.

1. Early in the novel, characters repeat the phrase “it can’t happen here.” Who are they and what are the reasons that they give.

2. Lewis is quoted as saying ‘when fascism comes to America it will have a Bible in one hand and a flag in the other.’ Is Windrip’s rise to power and subsequently his government based on religion and patriotism? Give examples.

3. What is Windrip’s political platform (lying world) and does it contradict the reality of life in his fascist state? If it does, how so?