

Reading Companion Page for "State of Seige"

Remember that Faulkner's *Light in August* is written in 1932, well ahead of the civil rights movement.

MAN-EN is written in 1967, just after much of the southern rebellion against desegregation.

Lynching, referred to in MAN-EN, is execution by mob and was carried out against blacks after the Civil War and into the first half of the 20th century. Here's a quote from the wiki page (Lynching - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia):

The ideology behind lynching, directly connected with denial of political and social equality, was stated forthrightly by [Benjamin Tillman](#), [governor of South Carolina](#) and later a [United States Senator](#):

We of the South have never recognized the right of the negro to govern white men, and we never will. We have never believed him to be the equal of the white man, and we will not submit to his gratifying his lust on our wives and daughters without lynching him.

I would like you to listen to portions of the below podcast, to get a sense of the strife in the American south which Oe contemplated and which is behind many elements in MAN-EN. Some explicit, such as lynching, some more indirect, such as the "Emperor of the Super-Market" or the mentality of the people of the valley.

Oe's interest in southern writers such as Faulkner and O'Connor is for multiple reasons, including their use of violence, or their religious positions, but also for the connection to an area of the country with a tendency for groupthink and exclusive values.

I am also including this podcast to mimic Oe's approach to other writers. Oe does not cherry pick small aspects of writers for his own benefit (quotes, limited ideas, specific scenes) but rather considers the author more fully by reading him or her widely and thinking about his or her more complete positions and writing themes. So, instead of a single Web site to remind us of our history of lynching, or a comment that connects the plotline of MAN-EN to *Absalom! Absalom!* and civil rights in general, we take a somewhat closer look. The events discussed in this program are primarily from 1954-1965. MAN-EN was published in 1967. Oe had reread the complete works of Faulkner and was surely well aware of the violent events spread across the South ahead of, and just after, the Civil Right's Act of 1964.

The full podcast is about 53 minutes long. I have identified the portions I would like you to listen to, which total about 24 minutes, but of course you might be interested in listening to the full program. I have also provided various links, none of which are required but might be of interest to you.

The notes below should be open while listening, if possible.

Warning: This podcast most definitely has racially offensive language, and the topic is profoundly unsettling.

Web site for this podcast:

State of Siege: Mississippi Whites and the Civil Rights Movement - American RadioWorks

0:00:18 - 0:18:39

FIRST SEGMENT FOR LISTENING: Citizens' Council, a white supremacy group, as "groupthink" "villagers" "Yoknapatawpha Country mentality". Listen to Horace Harned's way of thinking, how the Council intimidated others to join, its propaganda machine,

0:00:18 - 0:03:44

if you like, can skip

0:03:44 - 0:04:39, sound clips that are pretty interesting, as introduction to the program.

if you like, can skip

0:04:39 - 0:05:32 Introduction to content of program: Many know the images of southerners who resisted desegregation (fat, tobacco-chewing white sheriffs and such). This is a program that explores the less well known groups more ordinary white residents of Mississippi who led the fight against desegregation.

0:05:32 - 0:18:39

Background links (optional):

Brown v. Board of Education - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (1954)

White Citizens' Council - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (formed 1954)

The Citizens' Council still exists. "The "Statement of Principles" begins with a declaration: "The American men and women who make up the Council of Conservative Citizens (CofCC) believe in, commit themselves to, and pledge to work for and support these fundamental principles of American civilization, liberty, justice, and national safety." [5] A list of 14 points detail the from the United States as a Christian country, the preservation of European peoples in the United States, to specific policies on family, the environment, national and state law. CofCC has chapter sites in Alabama, California, Mississippi, and the Carolinas to name a few, and also European allies, including the [British National Party](#), [Vlaams Belang](#) (in Flanders), and [Front National](#) (in France). Members of the CofCC describe themselves as "the country's most effective conservative activist

group.” (Citizens' Council - Participedia, http://www.participedia.net/wiki/Citizens'_Council)

Horace Harned: Race/Mississippi Horace Harned (pics and selected comments by him), The University of Southern Mississippi Digital Collections : Compound Object Viewer (17 page pdf transcript of an interview of Harned by Y. Katagiri in 1993)

Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

0:10:18 Citizen Council weekly TV Program propaganda

0:11:58 Other Citizen's Council activities: manual for school children explaining how blacks are different, other publications

0:12:44 Use of social networks by the Council (0:13:14 - 0:14:45, Reverend Ed King **reminds me of how Reverend Hightower in *Light in August* is hated for his moderate ideas**)

0:14:45 violence perpetrated by the Council

0:16:14 The Mississippi State Sovereignty Commission propaganda: **listen to the happy music** happy music and segregation (segregation least to a productive, law-abiding way of life)

0:18:30 how to set up for killing

Between the end of this segment and the next segment are comments about the program and its contents, how to access further information, and the events around James Meredith (James Meredith - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia) attending the Univ. of Mississippi ("Ole Miss") and the subsequent Ole Miss riot of 1962 - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia where federal troops were called in to enforce Meredith's right to attend the university again violent local resistance. (See also Bob Dylan's "Oxford Town" 1963).

0:28:49 - 0:33:53

SECOND SEGMENT FOR LISTENING: Listen to this for its violence, and notice the local attitude (we do not need to accepted national values, we have our own) "this is below the Mason-Dixon line ..."

Medgar Evers - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, Field Secretary of NAACP

0:28:49 "After Ole Miss white racial violence in Mississippi got even worse"

0:30:26 phone calls & technical difficulties

0:31:52 Evers as a marked man & his assassination

0:32:13 this stretch details the assassination and how the governor congratulated the killer personally, and how he was found innocent but retried 30 years later and sentences to life in prison. This portion of the segment is optional

0:33:53 (end)

The remainder of this program discusses the increasing success of activists in the midst of fierce resistance including the revival of the KKK and the "Freedom Summer of 1964" including the famous triple killing of Schwerner et al with 21 whites implicated in their torture and death but the State of Mississippi did not press charges. It further describes how the Citizens' Council declined in influence. The summary / recap is a succinct statement of the conclusions of the program.

Civil Rights Act of 1964 - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Voting Rights Act - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

0:34:50 1963 Eddie McDaniel (E. L. McDaniel) (KKK organized in Mississippi)
0:38:24-41:25 Summer of 1964: murder of Michael Schwerner - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, James Chaney and Andrew Goodman, Congress on Racial Equality field workers
0:42:49 the tide begins to turn (but Mississippi does not desegregate its public schools until 1970)
0:45:55 Citizens' Council organizes its own schools after desegregation, and have left a legacy of a dual school system that is draining the sources of small towns today

0:49:20 summary and recap