

The People v Leo Frank Film Questions:

1. How did the Jews of Atlanta reconcile (or bring together) their religious and national identities?
2. How did the trial and its aftermath affect Jews' sense of identity as Americans and their sense of security as Southerners?
3. What do you think motivated Tom Watson to launch anti-Jewish attacks in his coverage of the Leo Frank affair?
4. How did Leo Frank's legacy affect the next generations of Jews in the South?
5. What role did African-American literacy (and stereotypes about it) play in the Leo Frank case?
6. What is meant by the term "lynch law"? How was this extralegal tool used to enforce Jim Crow and support white supremacy?
7. Why do you think a white "Yankee Jew" was ultimately more threatening than a black Southerner to the public?
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9. What else was taking place at the time that might have inspired this revival and caused hostility toward not just blacks, but also "Catholics, Jews, [and] outsiders of any kind"?
10. As Atlanta became the "industrial gateway to the New South," what benefits and problems do you think the residents of the city experienced?
11. What is populism? Why do you think Tom Watson saw in the Frank case a populist struggle? Do you think he spoke for the majority of Southerners? Why or why not?
12. What does it mean to be "hung in effigy"? What message was sent to Jews and Gentiles by hanging Governor Slaton in effigy as "The King of Jews"?
13. Define "sensationalism." Why did newspapers then (and now) engage in tabloid journalism? Do you think it is ever okay to share the "gory details" with the reader or viewer? Explain.
14. Why did some Jews feel that the Jewish community should remain uninvolved in press coverage of the case while others felt strongly about speaking out?
15. How did "The Ballad of Mary Phagan" serve as a form of news media? What contemporary songs deal with current events? What is their impact?

