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# Alfred Dreyfus & The Dreyfus Affair



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# Early life (1859-1893)

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- born 9 October 1859 in Alsace, France
- family of Jewish descent
- family moves to Paris from Alsace after the Franco-Prussian war, and the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany

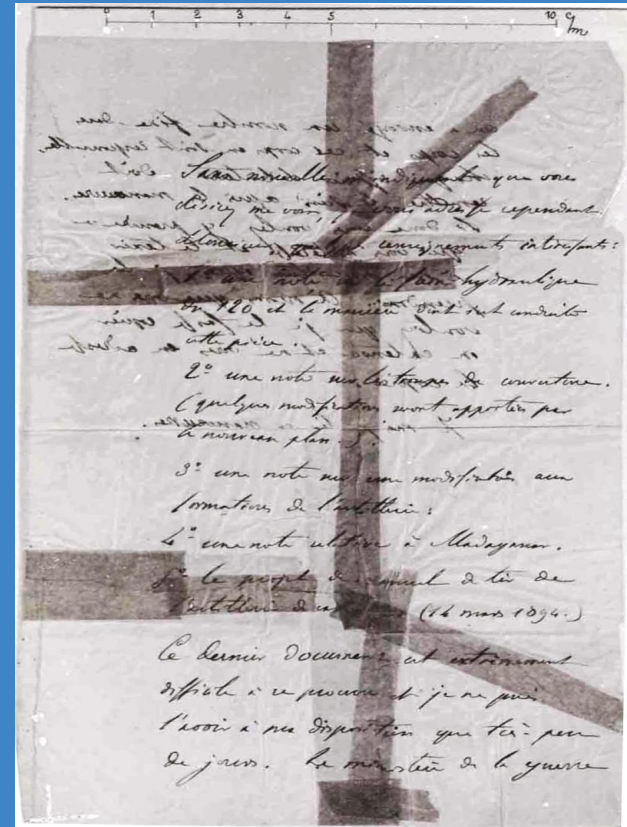
## Early Military Career:

- Dreyfus graduates from École Polytechnique as sub-lieutenant in 1880, whereafter he continues his military training and education
  - rapidly rises through military ranks, graduating from École Supérieure de Guerre in 1893, and becoming the only Jewish officer to serve in the French Army's General Staff headquarters
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# The Accusation

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- September 25th 1894, a document known as the bordereau arrives at the Ministry of War's Statistics Section.
- The bordereau purports to document the delivery of French military secrets to the Germans.
- A rapid investigation is launched, and soon after the officers searching for the author of the bordereau conclude that it is Dreyfus.



# The Accusation cont.

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- The fact that Dreyfus is Jewish plays a major role in his being accused.
  - On October 15th 1894, Dreyfus is arrested on the charge of high treason and held incommunicado in the military prison on rue du Cherche-midi.
  - Deputy Chief Du Paty is put in charge of a preliminary secret investigation, where he is told to come up with more incriminating evidence against Dreyfus.
  - The search proves fruitless, and the Statistics Section is thrown into a frenzy.
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# Dossier Secret

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- Mercier decides to create the incriminating evidence needed.
  - With the assistance of an archivist and an officer on the General Staff named Henry, he has several documents assembled and altered in what becomes known as the dossier secret.
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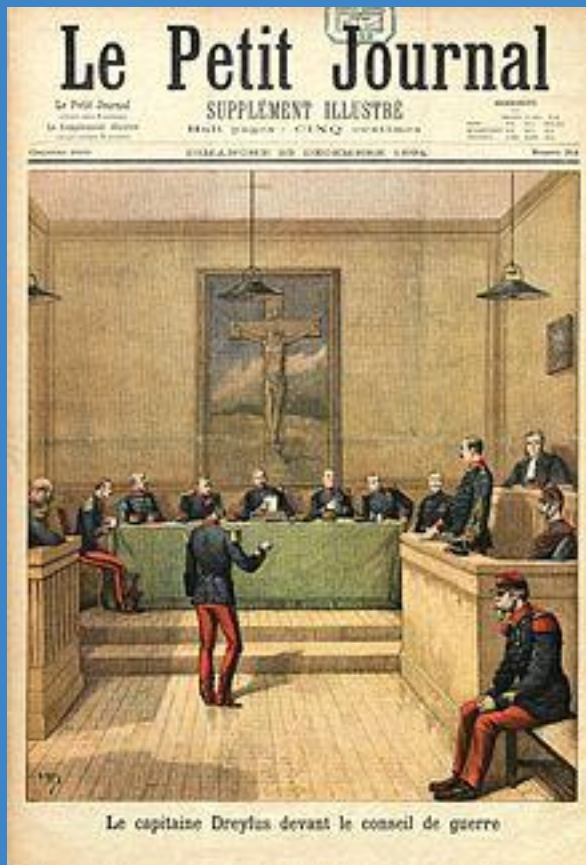
# Key Figures in Dreyfus' Accusation & Conviction

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# The Trial

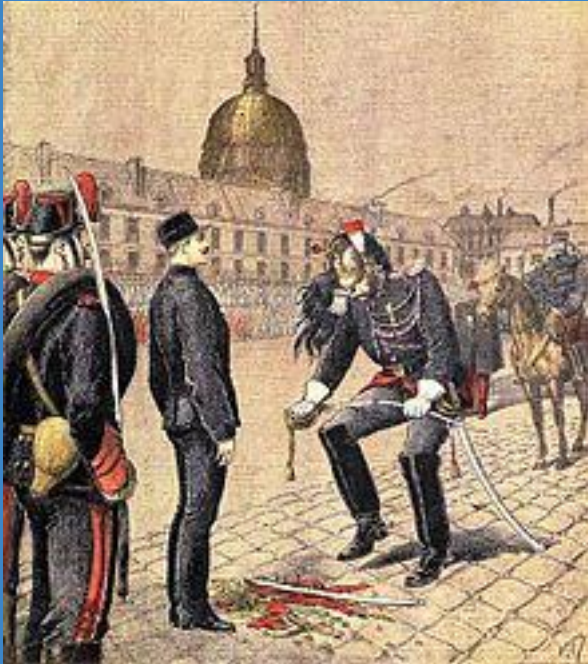
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- On December 19th 1894, Dreyfus' court martial trial begins.
  - A closed trial (huis clos) is imposed by the judges, against the wishes of Dreyfus' defense attorney Edgar Demange.
  - The dossier secret is secretly delivered to the president of the tribunal. The defense is not informed of either the existence or delivery of the dossier.
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# The Sentence

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- The military judges unanimously find Dreyfus guilty and sentence him to military degradation, deportation, and imprisonment for life in a fortified prison.



## Part II -- Dreyfus' Sentence

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- Seven judges unanimously convicted Alfred Dreyfus of collusion with a foreign power to the maximum penalty under section 76 of the Criminal Code: permanent exile in a walled fortification that is to say a prison, the cancellation of his army rank, and military degradation. (22 December 1894).
  - At the last minute, at the initiative of General Mercier, a law was passed on 9 February 1895, restoring the Îles du Salut, French Guiana as a place of fortified deportation so that Dreyfus was not sent to Ducos, New Caledonia.
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# Transport to French Guiana

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- The French Judicial System was extremely eager to get rid of Dreyfus. Within a few months he was on a prison transport from Saint-Martin-de-Ré to French Guiana.
  - The usual waiting time for a transport from Saint-Martin-de-Ré to French Guiana was between one and two years. The prison in Saint-Martin-de-Ré had a very strict regime.
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# Location of French Guiana

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Page 90 / Evans-Goddin has the wrong country

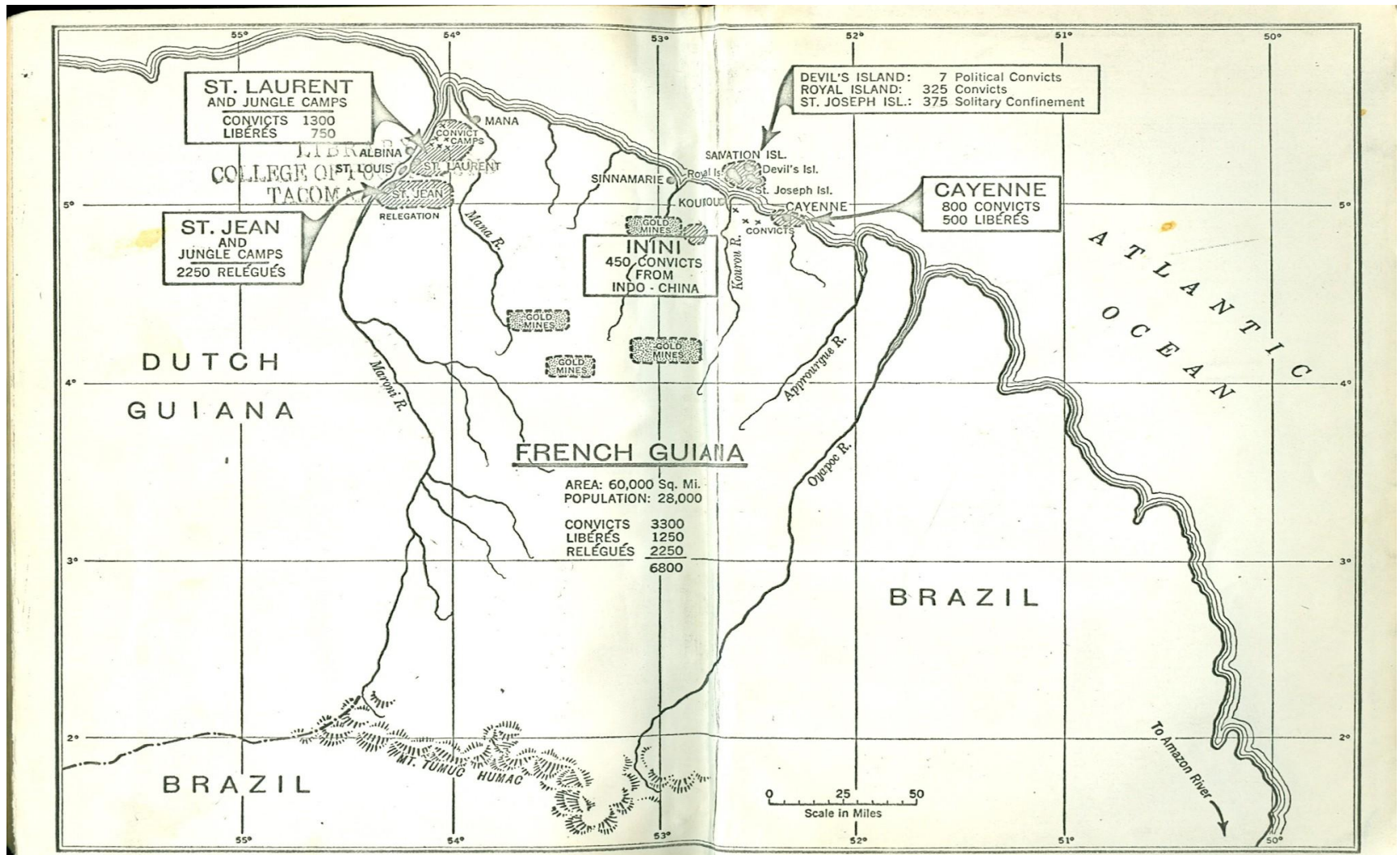


# Very Short History of French Guiana

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- French Guiana first became a penal colony in 1852. However, due to the very high mortality rates transports to French Guiana were stopped in 1867.
  - New Caledonia became the new penal colony and settlement in New Caledonia was successful.
  - However, transports resumed to French Guiana in 1883. Transports were stopped between 1914-1918 and then finally in 1938. The penal colony closed down in 1946.
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# Penal Colony Map of French Guiana



# Dreyfus arrives French Guiana

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- Dreyfus arrived in French Guiana in March 1895.
  - Devil's Island (Ile du Diable) was chosen for the "fortified" prison.
  - Ten years before, Devil's Island had been used as a leper's colony.
  - Dreyfus stayed on Ile Royale (in solitary confinement) until a hut was built for him on Devil's Island
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# Dreyfus on Devil's Island I

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- In April 1895 the little hut was ready for Dreyfus. It measured four square yards with a tin roof.
  - Dreyfus was the only prisoner on the island. The guards were instructed not to talk with him but this regulation was not taken seriously. They even played chess with Dreyfus.
  - However, Dreyfus got malaria and the attacks happened more and more often.
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# Dreyfus on Devil's Island II

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- Certain "coded messages" in letters were claimed to have been intercepted just as Dreyfus left for French Guiana
  - Dreyfus was confined to his hut 24 hours a day and he was to be placed in leg irons at night. Two wooden fences were constructed around his hut.
  - However, Dreyfus lodged a complaint and these restrictions were lifted. Then things became much worse.
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# Dreyfus on Devil's Island III

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- New guards were sent in who obeyed the no-speaking regulations to the letter and all newspapers/magazines from France were banned.
  - Dreyfus had a small library at his disposal and spent much of his time translating Shakespeare into French.
  - August 1897 Dreyfus was moved to a new hut. In this hut he had guards watching him 24 hours a day.
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# Dreyfus on Devil's Island IV

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- The only contact with the outside world Dreyfus had were letters from his family, however, these were heavily censored.
  - January 1898, "J'Accuse" by Emile Zola.
  - Finally, in June 1899 Dreyfus received an order to return to France for a new trial.
  - In total, Dreyfus spent four years and two months on Devil's Island.
  - Due to the Dreyfus Affair, Devil's Island became confused with the whole penal colony of French Guiana.
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# "J'accuse....!"

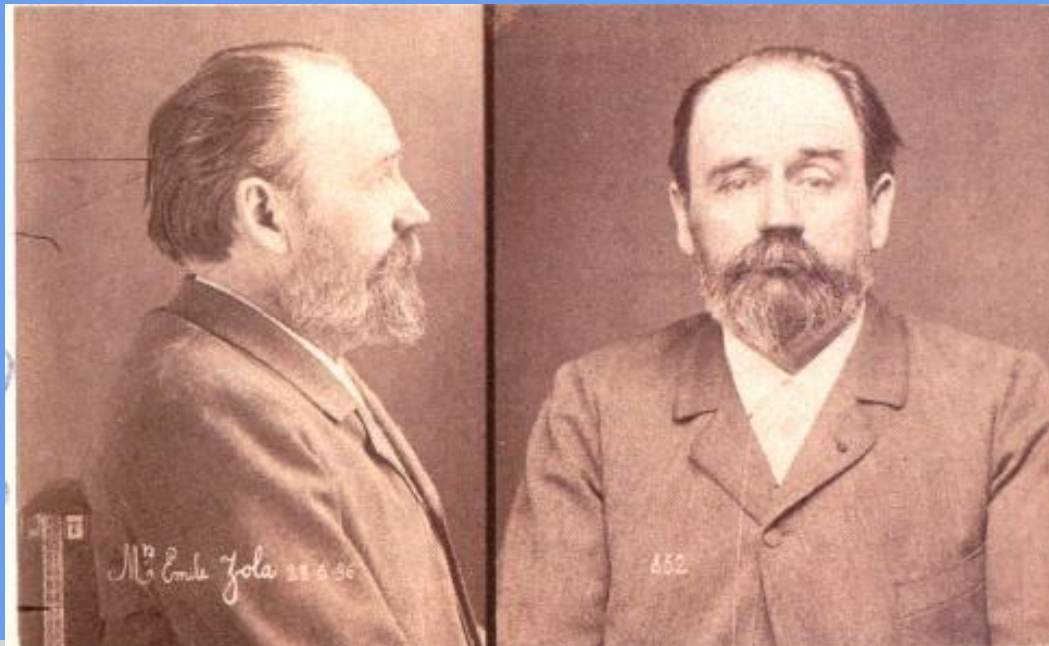
- January 13th 1898 Emile Zola published the first article providing all the existing data of the Dreyfus Affair.
- The goal was to establish an open public debate about the trial.
- Widely read by the public. The paper normally sold 30,000 "J'accuse...." sold 300,000
- Success
- His personal price.



# Zola's Importance

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- His sentence: one year in prison and 3,000 francs.
- Attacks and Support
- Exile in England.



## Dreyfusards Vs. Anti-Dreyfusards

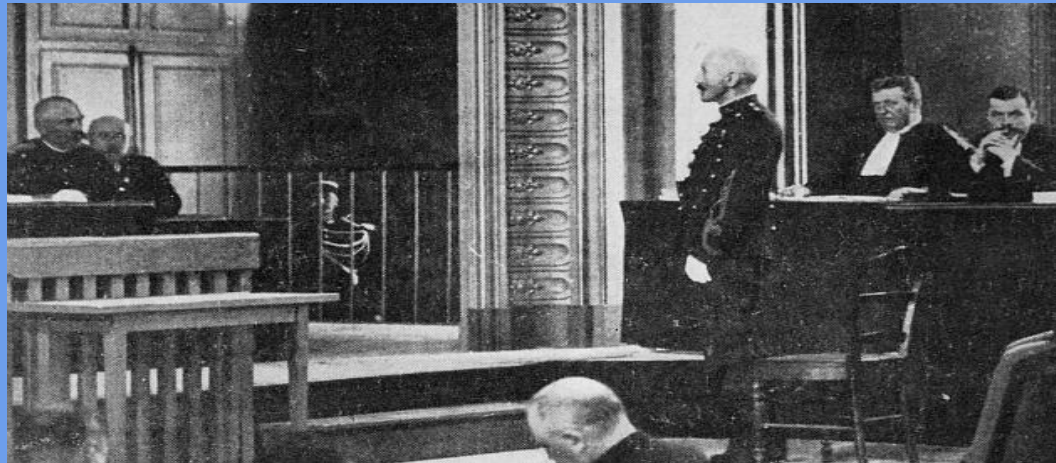
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- Dreyfusards: Republicans, leftist, in support of Dreyfus's Innocence
  - Anti-Dreyfusards: Right wing anti-Republicans and anti-semitic. They were also strongly affiliated with the Catholic Church. The Dreyfus Affair lead to a clear reorganization the French political landscape.
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# The Retrial

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- Received harsh treatment up to and during his trial on June 30th 1899.
- Attitudes of the public and the General Staff.
- The Prosecution
- The Defence
- Attacks and Evidence



# Reconviction & Reactions

- On 9 September 1899, the court rendered its verdict: Dreyfus was convicted of treason but "with extenuating circumstances"
- Sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.
- The verdict was on the verge of acquittal by one vote
- Many dreyfusards were frustrated by this final act
- All the General Staff testified against Dreyfus without providing any proof. They stubbornly considered evidence null by the confessions of Henry and Esterházy. The Trial even tended to go out of control, to the extent that the decisions of the Supreme Court were not taken into account.

# Life After The Affair

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- The guilty party who doctored the documents to incriminate Dreyfus was major Esterhazy who was caught, but later fled to England and never faced any charges.
  - The Government Pardoned Dreyfus
  - Jean Jaures tried reignite the affair, but it was buried the by the government because his documents were obviously false.
  - 1899 he was rehabilitated, meaning criminal record was wiped clean.
  - Dreyfus later rejoined the ranks of the French army and served through WW1 from 1914 to 1918 and was promoted to the rank of general.
  - 1935 he died peacefully at home.
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# Consequences of the Affair

- Political
- Social
- International

