

## What I Learned in 40 Years of Doing Intelligence Analysis for US Foreign Policymakers

Martin Petersen

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An advantage of getting older is increased perspective. I have been doing, thinking and writing about intelligence and intelligence analysis for almost 40 years now. The business we are in has changed a great deal in that time, but more in its form than in its fundamentals.

I want to focus on three broad topics: understanding the customer, the importance of a service mentality, and the six things I learned in doing and studying intelligence analysis during my career in the DI. While these experiences are drawn from work in the CIA, I believe the principles apply across the Intelligence Community (IC).

### ***Understanding the Consumer: Five Fundamental Truths***

I believe every intelligence product must be rooted in a strong understanding of the audience it is written for, and I believe there are five fundamental truths about the analytical products and their consumers.

***Truth number one: the product is “optional equipment” for many key consumers.***

The most precious commodity in Washington is not informa-

tion—there is an overabundance of information, data, opinion, and secrets—but time. The “future” in Washington is four years at its longest point and every day it is one day shorter. It is not surprising then that consumers of our services are in a hurry and that they are very busy people; the president’s day is actually planned in five minute increments. These people have many, many sources of information, and many of the people we

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serve believe they are better plugged into the world than we are. And in many cases, they are.

Our customers in the policymaking realm often do not understand our mission, our values, or our standards. They tend to be skeptical of intelligence, especially if they are new to the policymaking world. They formed their views about who we are, what we do, and how we do it from the same sources other Americans do: popular media, the press, and congressional reports—not always the most accurate or sophisticated of sources and generally not the most flattering. Our consumers have strong world views and clear policy agendas, and they often assume we have a policy agenda, too.

It is not surprising then that policymakers do not always see how we can help them: "After all, I, the policymaker, am smart and have excellent sources of information (including all the ones you have), and I am very busy, so why should I spend some of my most precious commodity on you?" The reality for intelligence officers is that we must woo them, sell them on the need for our services, and demonstrate the value of our material daily through its timeliness and its sophistication. If you are an intelligence officer, the title will often get you in the door, especially the first time, but it will not keep you there. Newcomers to the IC may not realize that the CIA presence in the Oval Office during the George W. Bush administration was the exception, not the rule.

If the IC is going to be part of the regular routine in the White House, not only must we have something to say that people there cannot get somewhere else—which has to be more than having secrets—but we have to be mindful of how we deliver it. We are not only optional equipment; we are also guests at their dinner party. If we spill the wine, insult the host, and overstay our welcome, we will not be invited back.

Speaking truth to power first requires access to power. My personal experience is that our consumers will take frequent bad news and unhappy

assessments as long as they are well-reasoned, supported by data and argument, and presented without rancor, value judgments, or arrogance.

***Truth number two: the written product is forever.***

A colleague who spent half his career in the DI and half in the National Clandestine Service (NCS) once said only half jokingly, "You know what the DI's problem is? You guys write things down. In the NCS we believe in the oral tradition." He was right in the sense that the written word is *forever*. Once it is printed, there is no taking it back or modifying it.

Briefings and background notes are important parts of doing the mission, but they leave no permanent record. One can fight over what was said

in a briefing, but the written word is in black and white. It is the *WorldIntel-*

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*ligenceReview* (WIRe) article, the serial flyer, the intelligence assessment, and the national intelligence estimate (NIE) that end up in the archives, and it is the paper product that gets held up at a congressional hearing or eviscerated on an editorial page.

And when I say forever, I mean *forever*. Relatively few people have read the now infamous NIE done in 2002 on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD), but everyone knows what it says. And everyone years and years from now will know what it said, because it is viewed—rightly or wrongly—as fatally flawed and responsible for the second Iraq war. It will never go away, and it joins the pantheon of other real and imagined CIA failures. Every time we publish, we go "on the record" and the record is there *forever*, for the second guessers, the hindsight experts, and anyone with an agenda. Thus, our judgments need to be as precise as we can make them, supported by evidence and argument, and accurately reflect our level of confidence *every time*.

**Truth number three: the public does not segregate success and failure.**

Critics of intelligence, our customers, and the general public do not say that the products of a certain office in CIA or DIA are really great, but that the products of another office in that agency are awful. Nor do they say that one type of analysis, say political, can be trusted, but that our work on something else, say S&T is unreliable. Nor will they say that although they were wrong last time, we can trust them this time.

No, customers remember, and they question. Sometimes they question fairly, but often they do not, especially those customers who find what is being said to be inconvenient or "unhelpful" in advancing a policy position they favor. From the CIA alone, I can produce a list of what I call "everybody

knows": everybody "knows" the CIA failed to predict the fall

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**Every poorly reasoned piece of finished intelligence tarnishes a brand name.**

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of the Shah of Iran in 1979 or the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 or the Indian nuclear test in 1998 or this or that. The facts are often far more complex, but they have entered the popular mythology. And the consumers of intelligence say out loud "Why should I trust you on this issue when you were wrong on that one?" Weak performance in one DI area immediately calls into question all work in the CIA.

President Kennedy famously said of the CIA that its successes will be secret and its failures will be trumpeted. To which I add my own corollary: in the intelligence business success is transitory, and failure is permanent.

**Truth four (closely related to truth three): our individual and collective credibility—and thus our ability to do the mission—rides on every piece of finished intelligence that goes out the door.**

Sad to say, no one cares what I think about a particular issue—and no one cares what you *personally* think either. They do care tremendously about what the CIA or DIA—or name the IC organization—thinks. The finished intelligence prod-

ucts that go out the door are not personal products but corporate ones.

IC products have brand names, and they are important and powerful ones. They can open doors, but they will not keep any analyst inside circles of power if that brand name is devalued by shoddy work. Our customers read our products for many reasons: to learn, to make better decisions, to know what the President's Daily Briefing tells the president, to look for ammunition in a policy fight, or to discredit what the IC says.


Every poorly-reasoned piece of finished intelligence tarnishes a brand name a bit and over time can produce cracks in the trust they place in us to live up to our tradecraft. When that happens there is nothing one can say and eventually the

broader trust is lost. Ask BP and Toyota. One bad oil well and a few sticky accelerators undid

years of excellent performance, and shouting "but our record is still better than that of [someone else]" makes no difference. We do not drill oil wells or build cars. We do the mission—the mission of protecting the United States. Our ability to "raise the level of the debate" or to "help policymakers make the best decisions possible" or to "speak truth to power"—however one defines the mission—rests on one thing and one thing only: our reputations for analytic rigor, objectivity, and total integrity. Lose that and we lose everything.

**Truth five: our customers are smarter and more sophisticated than we give them credit for; they have their own independent sources of information and analysis with which we are competing.**

And these customers are continually changing. We have to establish our credibility and *usefulness* individual by individual, administration by administration. There is no down time when it comes to quality.

 <b>DI Quality Framework</b> <i>Analytic Tradecraft Standards</i>				
A Message	Analytic	Convincing	Effectively Structured	Well-Written
Main point prominent and clearly stated	Makes judgments; does not just provide facts	Provides sufficient and compelling evidence to support judgments	Each section, paragraph, and sentence advances the story	Uses precise language, employing concrete examples and avoiding vague, ambiguous terms and jargon
Main point goes beyond what is obvious to a generalist	Provides necessary context: key drivers, appropriate historical context, comparisons that provide perspective, scale, whether development is new or consistent with ongoing trend	Free of actual or apparent contradictions (to include consistency between title, summary, text, scope note, background note)	One main point per section, per paragraph	Is concise
Main point has a "so what" for the US	Anticipates a critical reader's questions and answers them in the text	Reliability of information clearly articulated (e.g., corroboration, access)	Tics are consistent with the paragraphs to which they are attached	Free of grammatical errors, typos, and misspellings
If change from previous analytic line, explains what factors changed that resulted in amending the previous judgment	Makes differing views/alternative explanations clear, providing basis and implications of the difference	Free of bias, value laden terms, or advocacy	Avoids redundancy, groups like with like	Avoids awkward constructions
Provides opportunities for the U.S.	Is forward looking	Identifies gaps, potential impact on the analytic line, and efforts to fill them	Contains graphics that effectively complement the written product	<b>Key</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single points of failure</li> <li>• Should be present in all DI analysis</li> <li>• Required where appropriate</li> </ul>
Provides warning		Expresses confidence level in judgment		

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These five truths demand tradecraft excellence, they demand exacting standards. (see the DI Quality Framework above for an example), and they demand the pursuit of perfection. They demand that we learn from our past, and they demand that we ask the best of ourselves every time. To do the mission; to serve the policymaker; to protect the nation—requires nothing less.

### ***The Importance of a Service Mentality***

Excellence requires more than a standard of quality. I believe it also demands a specific approach to the craft of intelligence analysis: it requires a service mentality. A service mentality is the opposite of a product mentality, which often seems to drive the work of intelligence analysis, and the difference is easiest to explain by comparing the two. In a product mentality, the focus is

on the producer, who thinks of a product as his or hers. It is also about packaging that product and disseminating it widely. Success is measured in numbers—how many units were produced or how many received each unit. It is about filling a book or producing a product to demonstrate that an analyst is ready for the next big step in a career.

In a service mentality, the focus is on the customer—the consumer of our services—and specifically on how best to meet the customer's needs. It is not about the author or the producing component; it is about the recipient. It is about helping that customer understand an issue. It is about being timely, relevant, expert, and *corporate* in our approaches to providing service, intelligence analysis. Success is measured not by the number of units produced, but by how well the product addresses and answers the specific concerns of an identified and targeted audience.

Product and service are not mutually exclusive. Ideally every product we produce should be infused with a service mentality—although we often act like we are in the product business. What difference does it make? When the product is more important than the service it provides, we relax our standards to get the product—another unit of production—off the assembly line and out the door. *Close enough becomes good enough, and the brand name suffers.*

To infuse every product with a service mentality requires two things of intelligence analysts: One is a set of standards—the DI Quality Framework in CIA's case; the other is mastery of a simple technique—asking two questions before writing or briefing: *who is the primary audience for this piece and what is the specific intelligence question they need help with?*

It is very hard for the author of a piece to have a

service mentality when he or she is focused on a broad intelligence topic rather than a specific intelligence question. It is the difference between “we need a piece on the demonstrations in Tunisia” and “we need a piece on the options the Tunisian government has for addressing the cause of the demonstrations.” A good intelligence question has the following properties: it bounds or narrows the subject matter to be addressed; it generally contains a what, who, why, or where is it going element; it is specific as to the topic or event being addressed; and it is a question and generally not a “yes or no” question.

It is possible to have many different intelligence questions for the same event. Current intelligence pieces generally work best when they are organized around one central question, although they may touch on others. Which question to focus on is determined by who is selected as the primary audience and what that audience is most interested in or most needs to understand.

Forty years of experience have taught me that failing to identify a specific audience and an intelligence question up front is often at the root of the

weakest analytic efforts. In the Art of Review Seminar we talk about “The Road to Ruin,” the first step on which is not clearly defining the issue to be addressed. This in turn easily leads to other, too common, failings in analytical writing:

***A failure to present a clear basis for judgments.***

A weak piece typically speculates on what happens next but seldom provides the reason an analyst believes the speculation is correct. The most underused word in CIA DI analysis is “because.” Every “may” and “likely to” and “could” requires a “because” statement or its equivalent—the reason we believe what we believe. Absent the “because,” or its equivalent, that article is just another opinion in a town full of opinions.

***The use of imprecise language.***

It is not so much that lan-

guage in a work of analysis is opaque but that the point it is trying to make does not come through. It is stating that “X benefits from Y” without providing a standard by which to measure the benefit or spelling out precisely how and why X benefits. Words like “limits,” “benefits,” “suggests,” and all adverbs need a “because” or “why” or “how” to convey precise meaning. Internal inconsistencies, not surprisingly, are often rooted in imprecise language.

***The Six Things I Learned***

We all learn the craft of intelligence analysis by doing. The lessons are iterative and frequently opaque, and they generally come slowly. Often they are only clear in looking back. Now looking back over nearly 40 years, I think I have learned the following six things.

***First, how one thinks about the mission affects deeply how one does the mission.***

I think the intelligence analyst's mission is less about “connecting the dots” (although sometimes it is) or predicting the future (although sometimes it is) or speaking truth to power (although

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*Excellence requires a service mentality approach to the craft of intelligence analysis.*

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we often do) than it is about understanding the world. Dots and prediction and truth can cause us to narrow our focus in a world of intelligence challenges that are characterized by their complexity and most important, by their dynamic nature. In 40 years I learned that quite often the most important piece of the puzzle, and often the hardest one to get a handle on, is what the United States is doing in a given situation—or, in military intelligence terms, understanding the “Blue” component of a situation.

I always thought of my job as “bounding uncertainty” and by doing so helping make my guy smarter than their guy, whether it was across a conference table or across a battlefield and enabling our policymakers to make the best decisions possible given the time and information available. Sometimes that involved connecting dots or predicting courses of action or providing warning, but it always meant understanding the forces at work in any situation—the key variables and drivers and our adversary’s perspective. It is the difference between strategic understanding and tactical command of an issue.

***Second, intelligence failures come from failing to step back to think about underlying trends, forces, and assumptions—not from failing to connect dots or to predict the future.***

When our focus becomes too tactical we fail to see the strategic. We must learn to step back from time to time and ask ourselves: what are we *not seeing* that we would expect to see if our line of analysis were correct. The IC’s 24-hour production cycle often makes this hard to do, but because it is hard to do, it is essential that we do it.

An understanding of history and culture is key to coming to grips with the assumptions that underpin much of our analysis. And I am not talking about our history and culture, but the history and culture of the countries we work on as *the people and leaders of those countries under-*

*stand them.* Every analyst—regardless of discipline or role—needs a deep appreciation of how a people see themselves, their historical ambitions, and their grievances. For analysts focused on foreign leaders, or politics, or economics, it is essential that they understand how power is acquired, the preferred way of exercising power, and the acceptable and unacceptable uses of power, as well as the defining life experiences of the key actors in the countries they specialize in.

***Third, good analysis makes the complex comprehensible, which is not the same as simple.***

The key to making the complex comprehensible is having in mind a specific audience and a very precise intelligence question for the analysis to tackle. Data dumps and murky analysis almost

always are rooted in trying to write about a development with-

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***Absent the “because,” or its equivalent, an article is just another opinion in a town full of opinions.***

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out first asking, “Who is my audience and what *specific question* does it need answered?” It is that difference between “we need a piece on the rioting in Athens” and “we need a piece on the government’s options for addressing the underlying cause of the rioting.”

We do very well as a rule in responding to questions from policymakers. We come up short when we have to supply the audience and the question ourselves *and we start to write before we have done all the thinking.* If we think in terms of answering well defined questions, we can make complex situations comprehensible, and we also stand a better chance of making clear what we know and do not know accurately, conveying our level of confidence, and presenting a convincing basis for our judgments.

***Fourth, there is no substitute for knowing what one is talking about, which is not the same as knowing the facts.***

Former CIA Director Michael Hayden once famously said, “If it is a fact, it ain’t intelligence.” The business of intelligence analysts is more about putting facts in perspective than it is hav-

ing command of the facts. We are paid not for what we know, but for our ability to think about what we know—or think we know. It is about knowing what is important. It gets back to those assumptions, drivers and variables I dwell on.

Sources—clandestine, open source, technical, diplomatic, etc.—are not the same as knowledge. Sources are not the equivalent of, or a substitute for, expertise, the type of knowledge I talked about in the second thing I learned. All sources are best thought of as opinions, some more authoritative than others, but all should be subject to careful reflection and comparison to what we know and believe. The dangers in sources are three-fold:

- We tend to give greater credence to those that support what we already believe.
- Sources are not a scientific sample but a small slice of a much larger and more complex information picture.
- They never answer the critical question of what are we not seeing but should see if our analysis were correct.

During one of the most challenging times in my analytical career, I worked for the finest analyst I ever knew. In the middle of the Tiananmen Crisis in 1989—when everyone's hair was on fire—I found him late one afternoon going through a stack of musty old reports. I asked him what he was doing. He said, "I am looking for things that did not make sense then, but do now." He found some, and it profoundly affected our line of analysis.

***Fifth, intelligence analysis starts when we stop reporting on events and start explaining them.***

Our production cycle puts a premium on being agile, quick, and smart. It is often 24 hours or less. The DI is one place where a consumer can ask a question and get an answer—a thoughtful and considered one—overnight. It is one of the

DI's greatest strengths. It is also one of its great vulnerabilities. It makes it harder to step back and think about underlying causes, drivers, and variables, especially in a crisis situation. My Tiananmen story is the exception. My career as an analyst taught me that lesson one (how we think about the mission) and lesson two (understanding forces at work) are the key to operationalizing lesson five—the need to explain events.

***Sixth, managers of intelligence analysts get the behavior they reward, so they had better know what they are rewarding.***

This is a message for all managers and all who aspire to management. It is my experience that if you have clear standards and are seen as consistent and fair in applying them, your unit will live up to the standard. *And, you must also hold yourself to the same standards.* If you value analytic trade-craft, talk

about it and practice it. If you want open communication where different interpretations are considered, invite it. If you want honesty, be honest. And reward the behavior you profess to value.

There is a Chinese proverb: "If your vision extends one year, grow wheat; if it extends 10 years, plant trees; if it extends 10,000 years, grow and develop men." Managers, your job is to grow men and women who can do the mission. The standard of success, I believe, is uncompromisingly simple: "Did I leave the unit I led stronger than I found it?"

### ***Why It All Matters***

If there is an underlying reality to all that I have learned, it is the obvious: we are in a very difficult business. It is more life and death now than it was in my heyday. The consequences of getting analysis wrong are much greater now. Intelligence is also more "political" now in the sense that what is done today is more open than it has ever been and as a result more subject to partisan sniping.

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There are some who say the United States is a declining power or that it is the source of many of the world's problems. Time will tell on the first question, but I believe the United States is a force for good in the world, and how powerful a force depends as much on our knowledge as on our military and economic might. I tell intelligence analysts I teach that more often than not they are the source of that knowledge. It is their professionalism and tradecraft that provide checks on the system, light the way, and leverage US power. All the dollars spent on intelligence—the collectors in the field, the technical systems, and the lives at risk—are for naught, unless that knowledge comes together in what analysts do every day.

As the deputy executive director at the CIA, I addressed each class of just-promoted CIA Senior Intelligence Service officers, and each time I asked for a show of hands of those who believed they would never see WMD used on US soil in their lifetimes. The question always startled them, and I never saw a single hand raised. We cannot afford to accept anything less than the pursuit of perfection. We cannot accept anything less than holding ourselves to the highest standards. We cannot accept anything less than our best effort every time, every day. The potential consequences are too great.

And I know it is damn hard. Intelligence analysis is less fun than a policy rotation or an overseas assignment. It is less honored and

romanticized than other aspects of the Great Game. It is frustrating. It is exhausting. And even the best efforts will be picked at. The analyst's work will be criticized by the knowledgeable and the ignorant alike. It will even be demonized at times—independent of its quality—and it will always be hostage to the politics of the moment.

But—and I say this with my four decades of perspective—what intelligence analysts do has impact. It matters. I have seen the quiet victories of intelligence and the mistakes averted, and I have seen critics become advocates because of

what analysts do every day.

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*What intelligence analysts do matters. I have seen the quiet victories...mistakes averted...and critics become advocates.*

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We all chose careers in intelligence for the

same reason: to make a difference, to do the mission. The colleague who teaches the Kent School's Art of Review Seminar with me tells a story about Abraham Lincoln, who in one of the darkest hours of the Civil War attended a Sunday service in that little church that still stands across from the White House. On his way back, he was asked by a fellow parishioner what he thought of the young reverend. Lincoln replied that he had a strong voice and clear message, but that he failed to do one thing; he failed to ask us to do something great.

I am asking every analyst who reads this to do something great. Do what brought you here. Do the mission every day to the best of your ability. And, may God bless you for doing it.





## The Dreyfus Affair: Enduring CI Lessons

*Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters*, by Louis Begley. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), xvi + 250 pp., notes, index.

*For the Soul of France: Culture Wars in the Age of Dreyfus*, by Frederick Brown. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010), xxv + 304 pp., notes, index.

*Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion, and the Scandal of the Century*, by Ruth Harris. (New York: Henry Holt, 2010), xvii + 542 pp., notes, bibliography, index.

### John Ehrman

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Officers new to counterintelligence (CI) and overwhelmed by the scope of what they need to learn often ask the same question: "Where do I start?" The best place might be the Dreyfus affair. The tale of French Army Captain Alfred Dreyfus, his wrongful conviction for treason, and how the argument about his guilt plunged France into turmoil is as dramatic and riveting as any true story can be. Just as important, it took place at the dawn of the modern intelligence era, when governments were forming the permanent, professional intelligence services that we know today. Its timing made the affair not only the first modern CI case but also the first modern CI disaster—that is, not just an investigative and legal error, but one that spilled over from the intelligence world into the sphere of mass politics, with consequences for culture and society as well.

Is there anything new to be learned about the Dreyfus affair? More than 115 years have passed since Dreyfus was convicted of treason, and it has been more than a century since he was exonerated. With the facts of the case long settled, the archives thoroughly mined, and hundreds of books and articles published, it would seem unlikely that there is much left to be discovered or said. As the appearance of three new books within a year indicates, however, scholars still can find new ways to look at the affair and draw fresh insights from it.

*Editor's Note: Readers familiar with the events are welcome to jump to the reviews of the three new works on the subject, beginning on page 26, at "The Irresistible Topic." Those new to or only slightly familiar with the case will want to read on to make the reviews more meaningful.*

### An Apparent Success

The Dreyfus affair began, ironically, as an outstanding CI success. After the disaster of the Franco-Prussian War and collapse of the Second Empire in 1870, France began to develop a modern military intelligence system and, during the 1880s, added a substantial CI capability, housed in a unit of the General Staff called the Statistical Section. Commanded by Col. Jean Sandherr, the Statistical Section caught several spies in the army during the late 1880s, ran numerous double agents, and built extensive surveillance networks to watch the movements of foreign—and especially German—diplomats in Paris. One of the section's most valuable recruits was Madame Marie Bastian, a cleaning woman who worked in the German Embassy and the apartments of German diplomats. The Germans routinely tore up sensitive documents and dropped the scraps into their wastebaskets, which Mme. Bastian dutifully emptied. Starting in 1889, she began delivering the contents of the embassy's

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wastebaskets to officers of the Statistical Section. Much of what she handed over was ordinary trash, but the French frequently reassembled and translated important documents.<sup>a</sup>

One of Mme. Bastian's deliveries, in September 1894, contained a torn-up note in French that, when pieced together by the Statistical Section, proved to be a list of French military secrets someone had given to the German military attaché. An investigation started immediately, and suspicion soon fell on Capt. Alfred Dreyfus, a 35 year-old Jewish artillery officer from a wealthy family in the lost province of Alsace, then serving on the General Staff. The investigators quickly concluded that the handwriting on the note, known as the *bordereau*, belonged to Dreyfus, and he was arrested on 15 October and charged with treason.

Dreyfus was court-martialed and convicted in December, and sentenced to life in prison. On 5 January 1895 in the courtyard of the École Militaire, Dreyfus was publicly degraded—his badges of rank and decorations stripped, and his sword broken over the knee of a sergeant—and sent to Devil's Island, a hellish rock off the coast of French Guiana. Frenchmen of all political persuasions expressed their relief that the traitor had been caught and given an appropriately harsh sentence. Except for Dreyfus's brother, Mathieu, wife, Lucie, and lawyer, Edgar Demange, all France ignored the captain's claim of innocence and seemed content to forget about him.<sup>b</sup>

### *A Time of Troubles*

France in the mid-1890s was a troubled country, buffeted by numerous political, social, and economic forces. The Third Republic had the support of most Frenchmen but, because many others were ambivalent about it or even denied its legitimacy, the republic was unsure of its strength. Monarchists still hoped to restore a king, and conservative Catholics and many clergy—themselves employees of the French state since 1802 and still in control of many aspects of French life—hated the republic's secularism. These groups were fiercely opposed by radicals and socialists, who not only defended republican ideals dating from 1789, but also wanted to eliminate the Church's influential and privileged position in French life. Spectacular financial scandals wracked the republic and often involved prominent political figures. Added to the mix was the fear of supporters of the republic that the army was not loyal to the government, a specter that had become all too real in the late 1880s when it seemed that a popular general, Georges Boulanger, was close to seizing power.<sup>c</sup>

France's problems extended to the economic and demographic spheres. The Industrial Revolution was late coming to France and, through the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, French economic growth lagged behind those of other major European states. Its population remained more rural, its industries were less capital-intensive, and its productivity growth was lower than Britain's or Germany's—Europe's economic and technological powerhouse—and overall growth in the 1880s and 1890s was low enough that economic his-

<sup>a</sup> For the establishment of French intelligence after the Franco-Prussian War, see Allan Mitchell, "The Xenophobic Style: French Counterespionage and the Emergence of the Dreyfus Affair," *Journal of Modern History* 52, No. 3 (September 1980): 414–25, and Douglas Porch, *The French Secret Services* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995), 28–30. For the Statistical Section, its capabilities, and Madame Bastian's role, see Jean-Denis Bredin, *The Affair* (New York: George Braziller, 1986), 43–47, and Marcel Thomas, *L'Affaire Sans Dreyfus* (Paris: Fayard, 1961), chap. 2.

<sup>b</sup> Bredin, *The Affair*, 98.

<sup>c</sup> For the evolution of the Third Republic and the various political splits in France during the late 1800s, see Jean-Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Rebérioux, *The Third Republic From its Origins to the Great War, 1871–1914* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984), Part I, originally published in French as *Les Débuts de la Troisième République* and *La République radicale?* (Paris, Editions du Seuil: 1973); and Norman Stone, *Europe Transformed* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 271–303. For the position of the Catholic Church, see Othon Guerlac, "The Separation of Church and State in France," *Political Science Quarterly* 23 (June 1908): 259–96, and for Boulangism, see Bruce Fulton, "The Boulanger Affair Revisited: The Preservation of the Third Republic, 1889," *French Historical Studies* 17, No. 2 (Fall 1991): 310–29. A brief overview of the Third Republic before the Great War is Alan Farmer, "The Third French Republic, 1871–1914," *History Review* (September 2001): 41–46.

torians have talked of France's stagnation during the period. Comparisons with Germany, of course, were critical to the French. Even as they talked bravely of the inevitability of another war and gaining revenge for the humiliation of 1870, Frenchmen knew that their country was falling behind in the vital indexes of national power.<sup>a</sup>

By far the ugliest manifestation of France's nervousness, however, was the wave of anti-Semitism that had been spreading across the country since the late 1880s. It started in 1886, when a racist journalist named Édouard Drumont published *La France Juive*, a book that blamed all of France's troubles on Jews. Drumont and others, using the new media of mass newspapers and inexpensive books, found a nationwide audience for a message built on the ancient theme that Jews were treacherous outsiders. Conservative Catholics, blaming Jews for the republic's anticlericalism and accusing them of conspiring against Christianity, and socialists, who held Jews responsible for the evils of capitalism, also took up the cause. Although anti-Semitism had peaked and was in decline as a political movement by 1894, in large part because it lacked a coherent program and strong leadership, it still remained, as one historian of the phenomenon has noted, "a considerable latent force" in French society.<sup>b</sup>

Amidst the troubles of the Third Republic, the French army occupied a unique position. The army not only was the country's defense against Germany, but it also was expected to be the instrument—having been reformed and modernized after the war—with which France eventually would gain revenge for its defeat. But the army's role went beyond the military

sphere, and during this period was intimately connected with France's conception of itself. With the country so divided, the conscription-based army was the only institution that Frenchmen had in common and upon which they all looked with respect. The army, in turn, saw itself as rising above the country's political squabbles and petty problems to embody the true spirit of France. Still, however, because of the mystical conception of its role, as well as the widespread fear that anything that undermined the army's claim to infallibility would increase France's vulnerability to Germany, officers and many civilians believed that the army had to be exempt from any external criticism.<sup>c</sup>

### The Case Returns

Even before Alfred was deported to Devil's Island, Mathieu, Lucie, and Demange began working to void the conviction and secure a new trial ("révision"). As they approached senior political figures and journalists seeking support, the trio gradually learned that Dreyfus's conviction had been far more than a ghastly mistake and miscarriage of justice. Sandherr and other senior officers were truly convinced that Dreyfus was guilty—they believed the handwriting on the *bordereau* to be his and took it for granted that a Jew would be predisposed toward treason, but they also understood that the investigation had been badly flawed and that the case against him was weak. In the weeks before the trial, they had searched for additional evidence but, finding little, began forging documents to shore up the case. They secretly gave a file combining real and forged documents to the judges at Drey-

<sup>a</sup> Mayeur and Reberieux, *Third Republic*, 46, 42; Rondo Cameron, "Economic Growth and Stagnation in France, 1815—1914," *Journal of Modern History* 30, No. 1 (March 1958): 1—13; N. F. R. Crafts, "Economic Growth in France and Britain, 1830—1910: A Review of the Evidence," *Journal of Economic History* 44, No. 1 (March 1984): 59; "War, Migration, and the Demographic Decline of France," *Population Index* 12, No. 2 (April 1946): 73—75.

<sup>b</sup> Robert Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1950), 180—81, 251, 321—22; Paula Hyman, "The French Jewish Community From Emancipation to the Dreyfus Affair," in Norman Kleeblatt, ed., *The Dreyfus Affair: Art, Truth, and Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 28; Michael Marrus, "Popular Anti-Semitism," in Kleeblatt, *Dreyfus Affair*, 59. See also Robert Byrnes, "The French Publishing Industry and Its Crisis in the 1890's [sic]," *Journal of Modern History* 23, No. 3 (September 1951): 232—42, and Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1951), chap. 4.

<sup>c</sup> Allan Mitchell, "A situation of inferiority: French Military Reorganization after the Defeat of 1870," *American Historical Review* 86, No. 1 (February 1981): 60; Mayeur and Reberieux, *The Third Republic*, 188—90.

fus's court martial and, with the defense unaware of the file's existence and unable to refute it, convinced them to convict the captain. Mathieu found out about the file in February 1895, and its existence became public knowledge in September 1896, when *L'Éclair*—an anti-Dreyfus newspaper seeking to refute articles by Dreyfus's supporters (Dreyfusards)—cited it as irrefutable proof of his guilt.

In the meantime, the case against Dreyfus fell apart, causing the leadership of the army to take desperate measures to maintain the fiction of his guilt. In early March 1896, another of Mme. Bastian's deliveries contained a note that became known as the *petit bleu*, which indicated a French traitor still was providing military secrets to the Germans. Commandant Georges Picquart, who had succeeded Sandherr as commander of the Statistical Section, immediately started an investigation. Picquart had observed Dreyfus's trial for the Ministry of War and General Staff and believed him to be guilty, but Picquart also was a thorough and honest investigator. As he went to work on the *petit bleu* and reviewed the Dreyfus evidence, Picquart found the truth: the handwriting of the *bordereau* and the *petit bleu* was that of Major Ferdinand Esterházy, an officer chronically in debt and with a well-earned reputation as a scoundrel. With Picquart beginning to press his superiors to arrest Esterházy—and they, in turn, determined to preserve the army's image and conceal their own misdeeds—the deputy chief of the General Staff in October 1896 sent Picquart on a mission to eastern France and, from there, in December assigned him to a post in Tunisia. With Picquart out of the way, General Staff officers conspired directly with Esterházy to forge more documents to add to the case against Dreyfus and discredit Picquart.

The truth could not be suppressed indefinitely, however. Until the revelation of the secret file, Lucie, Mathieu, and Demange mostly had worked behind the scenes to gain support for *révision*, and the public paid little attention to Dreyfus. Now, Lucie petitioned the Chamber of Deputies for *révision*, bringing the case greater prominence in the newspapers and public arena.

Next, while on leave in Paris in June 1897, Picquart told his lawyer what he had learned. The lawyer, in turn, passed the information to some of the same individuals whom Mathieu Dreyfus had approached for help.

With these revelations, events began to move swiftly, and public support for *révision* grew. *L'Aurore*, a newspaper edited by Georges Clemenceau—a politician who initially believed Dreyfus guilty, but who now supported *révision*—started publication in October 1897 and became the major Dreyfusard platform. In mid-November, Mathieu—upon learning that Esterházy had written the *bordereau*—published an open letter to the minister of war accusing the major. Another investigation followed, and Esterházy, demanding a trial to clear his name, was court-martialed in January 1898. The Dreyfusards had great hopes for the trial—the evidence against Esterházy was strong, and a conviction promised to exonerate Dreyfus and force *révision*. But the General Staff, determined to cover its tracks, manipulated the trial behind the scenes, and the major was acquitted on 11 January. It was this sham trial and prearranged verdict that led the novelist Émile Zola, who already was a leading voice for the Dreyfusards, to write and publish in *L'Aurore* two days later his "Letter to M. Felix Faure, President of the Republic," or, as Clemenceau concisely titled it, "J'Accuse."

### *The Affair*

The publication of "J'Accuse" started the 20-month period during which Dreyfus dominated French politics and society, and that is remembered as the heart of the affair. Zola, in prose that retains its power even today, accused the army of multiple violations of the law and named the officers responsible. His goal was to challenge the government to try him for libel and thus give the Dreyfusards another chance to present their case in court. Again, however, the army thwarted the Dreyfusards. Zola was tried on a narrow charge that effectively excluded evidence relating to Dreyfus. Despite damning testimony from Picquart, the Dreyfusards lost when Gen. Raoul de Boisdeffre, the chief of the General Staff, intimidated the court

with a reminder of the army's central role in French life. "If the nation does not have confidence in the leaders of its army, in those who bear the responsibility for the national defense," he told the court, "they are ready to relinquish that onerous task to others. You have but to speak." Zola was convicted on 23 February and in July fled to England to avoid imprisonment just a few days after Picquart was jailed on a trumped-up charge of divulging state secrets by telling his lawyer the previous year what he had learned.<sup>a</sup>

The affair now engulfed France, bringing the various forces in French life into a massive collision. To a modern American audience, the depth of division and feelings ignited by the affair are almost incomprehensible. In US history probably only the climax of the debate on slavery in 1860 was similar. The factions arranged themselves on each side, and each organized mass groups and demonstrations. On the Dreyfusard side, pressing the legal and political cases for *révision*, stood an alliance of republicans, secularists, modernizers, and socialists, as well as those conservatives appalled by the injustice of the case and by the army's extralegal maneuvering. Leading the fight against Dreyfus was the army, which claimed that no legal basis existed for *révision*, that reopening the case would weaken the army disastrously, and that the calls for *révision* were a Jewish plot to undermine the army and France. The army was joined by traditionalists, nationalists, the Catholic clergy, and anti-Semites, each of whom saw *révision* as a threat to their particular conception of what it meant to be French. Intellectuals on both sides wrote voluminously—the affair marked the emergence of the intellectuals as a force in

French politics—and the press carried their arguments to every corner of France. The affair focused, too, on the place of Jews in France. Anti-Dreyfusards tarred Jews as traitors or worse, and anti-Semitic newspapers, including Drumont's *Libre Parole* and much of the Catholic press, spread vile anti-Jewish propaganda and imagery. Not surprisingly, anti-Semitic rioting swept France and Algeria in early 1898, leading an American journalist to note that in "France today, it is perilous to be a Jew."<sup>b</sup>

As the affair continued in the streets and newspapers, the legal maneuvering went on. Finally, on 3 June 1899, France's highest court, the Supreme Court of Appeal, granted *révision* and ordered a new trial. On 9 June, Dreyfus boarded a French cruiser, and he arrived in France on 1 July. Zola, meanwhile, had returned to Paris on 4 June, and Picquart was released from prison on 9 June.

Politically, too, the Dreyfusards seemed to have gained the upper hand. On 22 June, a Dreyfusard, René Waldeck-Rousseau, formed a center-left coalition government. A stronger individual than most previous Third Republic prime ministers, Waldeck-Rousseau was determined to end the turmoil that threatened the republic. He moved quickly to restore discipline to the army by reassigning or retiring senior officers involved in the affair. He also ordered the arrests of prominent anti-Semites for fomenting unrest and suspended the salaries of Catholic clergy who were speaking out against the government.<sup>c</sup>

Dreyfus's second court martial began on 7 August 1899 in the town of Rennes. Counting the Esterházy and Zola trials, it was the fourth

<sup>a</sup> De Boisdeffre quoted in Bredin, *The Affair*, 268.

<sup>b</sup> Meyeur and Rebérioux, *The Third Republic*, 185; John T. Morse, Jr., "The Dreyfus and Zola Trials," *Atlantic Monthly* (May 1898): 589. Every account of the Dreyfus affair contains detailed descriptions of the impact on French life in 1898–99, but Bredin, *The Affair*, part III, may be the best. On specific aspects of this period, see Stephen Wilson, "The Antisemitic Riots of 1898 in France," *Historical Journal* 16, No. 4 (December 1973): 789–806; Paula Hyman, "The Dreyfus Affair: The Visual and the Historical," *Journal of Modern History* 61, No. 1 (March 1989): 88–109; Nancy Fitch, "Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism: The Dreyfus Affair in Rural France," *American Historical Review* 97, No. 1 (February 1992): 55–95; Norman Kleeblatt, "MERDE! The Caricatural Attack Against Emile Zola," *Art Journal* 52, No. 3 (Fall 1993): 54–58; Jeremy Jennings, "1898–1998: From Zola's 'J'accuse' to the Death of the Intellectual," *European Legacy* 5 (December 2000): 829–44; and Susan Suleiman, "The Literary Significance of the Dreyfus Affair," in Kleeblatt, *Dreyfus Affair*, 117–39.

<sup>c</sup> On Waldeck-Rousseau's ministry, see R. A. Winnacker, "The Délégalion des Gauches: A Successful Attempt at Managing a Parliamentary Coalition," *Journal of Modern History* 9, No. 4 (December 1937): 449–70.

time the case had come to a court and, once again, army witnesses insisted that the evidence confirmed Dreyfus's guilt. On 9 September, the court-martial convicted Dreyfus of treason, but this time with attenuating circumstances, and sentenced him to 10 years. The absurdity of the verdict—Esterházy had publicly admitted in July that he had written the *bordereau* and, in any case, how could treason be excused?—appalled the world. The judges, wrote the *New York Times* in a comment typical of foreign reaction, “looked more guilty” than Dreyfus ever had.<sup>a</sup>

With France exhausted by the affair and the object of worldwide ridicule, a solution had to be found. After the Rennes verdict, Waldeck-Rousseau began working with other Dreyfusards to arrange a pardon, which President Emile Loubet granted on 19 September 1899. Two days later, the minister of war, Gen. Gaston de Galliffet, instructed the army that the “incident is over,” and, in December 1900, an amnesty law was passed, excusing all misdeeds related to the affair. The Dreyfus affair quickly died away, although Alfred continued to pursue *révision* of the Rennes verdict and complete exoneration. Finally, on 12 July 1906, the Supreme Court of Appeal overturned Rennes, declaring that “of the accusation against Dreyfus, there is nothing that remains standing.” On 20 July, in the same courtyard where he had been degraded almost 12 years before, Dreyfus was restored to the army with the rank of commandant and was made a knight of the Legion of Honor.<sup>b</sup>

### The Irresistible Topic

The drama of the affair has made it irresistible to writers. All of the major participants wrote books and memoirs, the first appearing while the affair still was unfolding, and hundreds of works have appeared since. Amidst this wealth of written accounts, however, that of Jean-Denis Bredin, *The Affair* (published in

French as *L’Affaire* in 1983, with the US edition appearing in 1986), remains the best available in English. Bredin, a prominent French lawyer, tells the story carefully and with precise detail. His prose, however, is never ponderous, which makes the book’s 500-plus pages easy to read, especially as he gives his readers a good feel for the passions that swept France. Given his reliability as a historian and his literary skill, Bredin is unlikely to be surpassed for many years. Nonetheless, in the past two years three authors have tackled the Dreyfus affair. Each has looked at it from a different point of view, and each is worth reading for different reasons.

The first of the books, by lawyer-novelist Louis Begley, is *Why the Dreyfus Affair Matters*. At just over 200 pages of narrative, it is the shortest of the three, and Begley provides a concise and workmanlike narrative of the affair. Indeed, anyone who is new to Dreyfus and simply wants a quick overview of the case will be satisfied. But Begley has a greater purpose for his book. It is part of a Yale University Press series called “Why X Matters,” which tries to show the current relevance of people and ideas from the past. For Begley, the relevance comes from the war on terror, the abuses at Abu Ghraib, and questionable charges against detainees at Guantanamo. “Just as at the outset of the Dreyfus Affair the French found it easy to believe that Dreyfus must be a traitor because he was a Jew, many Americans had had no trouble believing that the detainees at Guantanamo—and those held elsewhere—were terrorists simply because they were Muslims,” he writes.<sup>(43)</sup> Begley’s heroes are the Dreyfusards and those he sees as their modern-day heirs in the United States—the whistle-blowers, lawyers, and judges who have stood up against “kangaroo trials” and “redeemed the honor of the nation.”<sup>(45)</sup>

Begley has a point, but it is not as strong as he believes. He certainly is correct that the Dreyfus affair is a reminder of the need for

<sup>a</sup> Rowland Strong, “Guilty’ Is the Dreyfus Verdict,” *New York Times*, September 10, 1899: 1. For foreign reactions to the Rennes verdict, see R. D. Mandell, “The Affair and the Fair: Some Observations on the Closing Stages of the Dreyfus Case,” *Journal of Modern History* 39, No. 3 (September 1967): 253–65.

<sup>b</sup> Bredin, *The Affair*, 434, 480.

great care in making serious charges and of humanity's almost infinite capacities for injustice and hysteria. But Americans do not need to look to Dreyfus for that lesson; we have cases like Leo Franks, the Scottsboro Boys, My Lai, and Watergate to show us our own records of injustice and the covering up of official misdeeds. More important, the United States in the first decade of the twenty-first century is not France in the 1890s. There are no serious challenges to the legitimacy of our republic, no institution makes the French army's claim of being exempt from criticism, and US administrations have not used slander or forged evidence to cover up crimes. Rather, the debates about Guantanamo and the treatment of prisoners have been typical of how modern American politics work through controversial issues for which there are few precedents—slowly and hesitantly, surrounded by noise, and with the fear of making an irrevocable mistake outweighing any desire to rush to a conclusion. This muddle may be unsatisfying, but it also means that the United States is not ripping itself apart or indulging in the kind of ethnic hatred that marked the French debate about Dreyfus.

If Begley's book serves best as an introduction, Frederick Brown's *For the Soul of France* places the affair in its broad context. This is the best written of the three books, as Brown, who previously penned a biography of Zola, combines deft writing and biographical sketches with brief histories of the major political and cultural conflicts that marked the first three decades of the Third Republic. Each of the cases he presents—including the building of Sacré-Coeur, the scandals over Union Générale and Panama, the rise and fall of Boulanger, the building of the Eiffel Tower, as well as the Dreyfus affair—pitted the forces of French traditionalism and Catholicism against modernizers and secularists, in battles far more fierce than any of the culture wars we have experienced in the United States during the past two decades. In each episode, moreover, the arguments eventually centered on the Jews and their place in French society. The collapse of the Union Générale, which was run by a Catholic financier, was widely attributed to Jewish conspiracies that simultaneously con-

trolled the republican government. Similarly, Brown's description of reactions to the Eiffel Tower shows how these controversies encapsulated the passions and irrationality running through French society. "For aesthetes, Eiffel's tower was the grotesque child of the industrial age, desecrating a museological city. For Catholics, it was the sport of revolutionary Nimrods expounding their secularism in Notre Dame's parish with phallic arrogance. And for nationalist zealots, who joined the chorus, the wrought-iron tower, incommensurate with everything else in Paris, was a tyrannical mutant, a foreigner lording it over the French past and future, a cosmopolite aspiring to universality, a potential instrument of treason. As such, it could only be the invention of 'Israel.'" (151)

In this telling, the Dreyfus affair becomes just one more front in France's internal conflicts. Indeed, Brown's account of the affair takes only 50 of the book's 250 pages of text, and it seems notable more for its intensity than for the issues in play. Every factor at work during the affair had been on display since 1870, and many of the individuals who would play major roles in the controversy had come to prominence in the episodes Brown describes; French cultural and political history from 1870 until Dreyfus's arrest seems to be a long rehearsal for the climactic period from his degradation to the Rennes verdict. The risk of this approach is that the affair might start to lose its visibility and no longer seem as important an event as we are used to viewing it. Nonetheless, *For the Soul of France* is the account for those who like their history presented with linear themes and who want to know the long background to specific events.

The last of the three books, by Oxford University historian Ruth Harris, is *Dreyfus: Politics, Emotion, and the Scandal of the Century*. This is a comprehensive history of the affair and goes well beyond the standard narrative approach, such as that used by Bredin. Instead, Harris dives deeply into the people, ideas, and cultural phenomena of the affair. The result is a book of great complexity, filled with many surprises. The history of the affair has been written from the Dreyfusard side,



which has given us a portrait of brave and good Dreyfusards fighting the reactionaries and bigots. By digging deep, however, Harris shows that the situation was much more complicated. Early on, for example, she shows that the army's relationship with Dreyfus was uneasy long before the discovery of the *bordereau*. Dreyfus owed his advance to reforms—enacted after the Franco-Prussian War—that created a modern staff system and opened opportunities for Jewish officers who, until then, would have been on the margins of the army. But traditionalists disliked the reforms, many of which were copied from the Germans. By 1894, the traditionalists were regaining power in the army, and the officer corps was again closing to outsiders; Harris speculates that Dreyfus's career probably would not have lasted much longer, even if he had never come under suspicion of espionage.

Harris finds other crosscurrents to explore. One intriguing aspect was the role of the many Alsatians who were involved in the affair and who, like the Jews, were in a difficult position. "Alsations insisted on their Frenchness, but they were often seen as the embodiment of Germanness. They thus had to position themselves against the prejudices and storms that such polarized categories created," she writes. (74) Dreyfus, in an unfortunate reflection of his Alsatian origin, spoke French with a German accent, which made him doubly suspect. This also leads to her portrait of Picquart, whom the Dreyfusards held up as a great hero of the affair, but who also typifies the contradictions within many of the players. Picquart was an Alsatian, which made it that much easier for his superiors to hound him and portray him as a pawn in external conspiracies; he was a shrewd bureaucrat but fudged some aspects of his investigation to protect his career; he was an intellectual and a polymath in an army that distrusted too much cleverness; and he shared the anti-Semitism of the officer corps.

Harris undertakes many other interesting explorations, each of which shows that nothing about the affair can be taken at face value. For example, Harris shows how Dreyfus became a useful object for both sides as they pursued their broader political goals, and she covers the

Dreyfusards' propaganda and myth-building as well as the anti-Dreyfusards' use of Catholic martyrology to build support for their cause. Elsewhere, Harris wonders why many on the right insisted on Dreyfus's guilt despite the evidence and their own unease with anti-Semitic excesses. The answer, she says, lies in their memories of political battles from years past. "When they saw Joseph Reinach and Georges Clemenceau, who had been tainted by the Panama Scandal, running the Dreyfusard campaign, they were appalled that such politicians should now claim the moral high ground," she explains. (217) Harris also has a fascinating chapter on *salonnières* and mistresses of powerful men—what is French history without them?—who played critical roles in the affair. On the Dreyfusard side, too, Harris reveals that backbiting and self-serving behavior were the norm.

This is an insightful and sophisticated book. Harris's micro-level view of the affair gives a vivid demonstration of how and why people acted as they did, and few come out as purely good or bad. She also tells us much about what was happening around France and how the affair played out in the provinces. This is not an easy book, however. The prose is clear and generally lively, but the level of detail means that in some places it is hard going. Nor is this the book for anyone new to the affair. A reader who plunges into *Dreyfus* without either a familiarity with French history and politics or without first reading Bredin or Brown is unlikely to get very far. Those with the background, however, will find it an exceptionally rewarding work.

### ***Dreyfus and Counterintelligence Today***

As interesting as Brown's and Harris's approaches to Dreyfus are, some may wonder what relevance these books, and the affair, have for us today. There are several answers to this question. The most obvious, from Begley, is that the affair is a timeless warning about injustice. The memory of Dreyfus does indeed remain a touchstone for those who want to call attention to wrongful judgments. Unfortunately, this also leaves the affair vulnerable to



manipulation—defenders of the Rosenbergs and Alger Hiss, to note two major American cases, for decades claimed that these spies were Dreyfus-style victims. Another answer is that the case actually has never gone away, especially in French political life. In 1983, Jack Lang, the minister of culture in the Socialist government, commissioned the creation of a statue of Dreyfus. When it was ready in 1986, the proposal to place the statue at the École Militaire enraged the army and started fresh discussions of the traditionalist-modernist divide in French political culture. After two years of indecision, the statue was finally set up in the Tuileries. Six years after that, on the centenary of Dreyfus's original conviction, the head of the French army's historical section was sacked after he wrote an article minimizing the army's misconduct and suggesting Dreyfus may not have been innocent. The episode, noted Bredin, showed the "persistence of the old anti-Dreyfusard mentality, conserved and transmitted for over a century." Others have noted that, as a result of the affair, French governments still distrust their intelligence services and consequently make poor use of them.<sup>a</sup>

For US intelligence officers, the affair has an entirely different relevance. It is a basic truth in the CI world that intelligence services are products of their societies and reflect the histories, politics, morals, and cultures of the populations that supply their officers. Studying these topics is an important part of any effort to understand the behavior of an intelligence service, which is the essence of CI work. In the Dreyfus affair, this means understanding why the Statistical Section and the army, at every turn, doubled and redoubled their bets against Dreyfus. Their behavior is incomprehensible without an understanding of the anxieties and conflicts that wracked France at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today, too, no one will understand the behaviors of the US, British, French, Israeli, or Russian intelligence services—and,

for that matter, the different ways they respond to espionage cases—without knowing the contexts in which they are situated. A CI officer needs to be a historian, sociologist, political scientist, and cultural analyst, all at once.

I began this essay by suggesting that an aspiring CI officer begin learning his craft by studying the Dreyfus affair. The contributions of Begley, Brown, and especially Harris remind us that Dreyfus is the starting point for modern CI history and show that the case is a model for approaching the study of CI and espionage. The large and varied number of factors involved makes a final point, as well. Anyone planning to do serious CI work has a lot of studying to do.

### For Further Reading

The Dreyfus affair has generated an enormous literature—the Library of Congress catalog lists more than 150 books, in both English and French—beginning with works written shortly after Dreyfus's conviction and continuing to the present.

Three books are indispensable to understanding the affair. The first is Jean-Denis Bredin, *The Affair* (New York: George Braziller, 1986), originally published in French as *L'Affaire* (Paris: Julliard, 1983). Bredin, a French legal scholar, covers both the case and the political and social aspects of the affair in depth, and with insights that make his work the best single volume on the affair. After Bredin, the best account is Marcel Thomas, *L'Affaire Sans Dreyfus* (Paris: Fayard, 1961). Thomas, a French archivist, is more narrowly focused than Bredin and based his work on a deep familiarity with the original documents from the case; unfortunately, his book has never been translated. The third book is an English collection—translated by Eleanor Levieux and edited by Alain Pagès—of Zola's

<sup>a</sup> Stanley Meisler, "Statue Needs a Home: The Dreyfus Affair—It Never Dies," *Los Angeles Times*, October 30, 1986: 1; Stanley Meisler, "Paris Finally Finds a Place for Dreyfus Statue," *Los Angeles Times*, June 9, 1988: 11; Scott Kraft, "A Century-Old Scandal Haunts France's Army," *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 1994: 4; Alan Riding, "100 Years Later, Dreyfus Affair Still Festers," *New York Times*, February 9, 1994: A10; Eric Denécé and Gérald Arboit, "Intelligence Studies in France," *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 23, Issue 4 (Fall 2010): 727.

articles on the affair, *The Dreyfus Affair: "J'accuse" and Other Writings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), which also contains a useful chronology and capsule biographies of the major figures. Although not central to understanding the case, Alfred Dreyfus, *Five Years of My Life: 1894-1899* (New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1901) provides extracts from Dreyfus's letters and prison diary and gives a good sense of his character.

Other works cover specific aspects of the affair. Bredin provides a thorough bibliography, broken down by subject area, although most of his references are to French works. Frederick Busi, "A Bibliographic Overview of the Dreyfus Affair," *Jewish Social Studies* 40, No.1 (Winter 1978): 25-40, is a useful guide to the French and English literature as it stood in the late 1970s. Two review articles by Eric Cahm, "No End in Sight for Dreyfus Research: The Beginning of a Twelve-Year Centenary," *Modern and Contemporary France* 3, Issue 2 (May 1995): 202-5, and "Centenary Reflections on Rennes and the Dreyfus Affair," *Modern and Contemporary France* 7, Issue 4 (November 1999): 509-12, update Busi's listings. Below are individual works particularly useful for understanding various aspects of the affair.

The standard account of the early years of the Third Republic is Jean-Marie Mayeur and Madeleine Rebérioux, *The Third Republic From Its Origins to the Great War, 1871-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). For an overview of European political, economic, and social change in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that places French developments in their international context, see Norman Stone, *Europe*

*Transformed* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

On anti-Semitism and the affair, see Robert Byrnes, *Antisemitism in Modern France* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1950); Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1951), chap. 4; and Nancy Fitch, "Mass Culture, Mass Parliamentary Politics, and Modern Anti-Semitism: The Dreyfus Affair in Rural France," *American Historical Review* 97, No. 1 (February 1992): 55-95.

For the French military and the affair, the major work is Douglas Porch, *The March to the Marne: The French Army 1871-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chaps. 1-4. Allan Mitchell's two articles, "The Xenophobic Style: French Counterespionage and the Emergence of the Dreyfus Affair," *Journal of Modern History* 52, No. 3 (September 1980): 414-25, and "A situation of inferiority: French Military Reorganization after the Defeat of 1870," *American Historical Review* 86, No. 1 (February 1981): 49-62, also are valuable aids to understanding the army's behavior. Robert Kaplan, "Making Sense of the Rennes Verdict: The Military Dimension of the Dreyfus Affair," *Journal of Contemporary History* 34, No. 4 (October 1999) 499-515, makes interesting points about the value the French military secrets involved in the affair but spins an unlikely explanation for the army's behavior.

For a collection of images generated by the affair, as well as essays on its artistic, legal, literary, and intellectual aspects, see Norman Kleeblatt, *The Dreyfus Affair: Art, Truth, and Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).

