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**The Dreyfus Affair - Part II**

**Lead: The year was 1894 and a German spy was known to be at work in the French Ministry of War. Investigators accused Captain Alfred Dreyfus who became a target in great measure because he was a Jew.**

**Intro.: A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Anti-Semitism has rumbled just beneath the surface of western culture since the twilight of the Christian era. Occasionally engaged in open persecution, anti-Semites considered Jews to be clannish**

**and their religious practices more than a little subversive. Many Jews were involved in the professions of law, medicine, and when permitted, occupied key positions in national service. Because the Roman Catholic Church prohibited the charging of interest, Jews, not burdened by such regulations, gravitated toward finance, money-lending, and commerce. An added advantage of these occupations was that, in times of persecution, Jewish assets were portable. Cash crosses borders.**

**Yet, Jewish success in business and banking was a further cause of jealousy and resentment. In the wake of emancipation, when Jews were given full political and religious rights**

**in the nineteenth century, the tide of anti-Semitic propaganda and agitation began to swell. Jews were caricatured as greedy, hard businessmen. Rich Jewish banking families such as the Rothschilds were thought to be conspiring to subject the world to Judaism.**

**Particularly suspect were Jews from Alsace-Lorraine, that largely French speaking region of the Rhine Valley which had been annexed by Germany after its victory in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Anti-Semites considered Alsatian Jews, no matter what their true sympathies, to be German Jews. When in 1894, evidence came to light of highly sophisticated, pro-German espionage**

**in the French War Office, Army investigators began to search the records of officers assigned to the General Staff. One especially brilliant officer stood out. Captain Alfred Dreyfus was singled out as the spy. He was the son of a wealthy, passionately pro-French Jewish family, whose loyalty to France had caused them to flee their Alsatian home after the German takeover. Dreyfus was not popular at the War Office. He had a prickly personality and, because of his brilliance, tended to criticize the mediocre ideas of his superiors. Though his handwriting did not match that of the traitor's and though he was clearly innocent, Dreyfus was secretly accused, tried, convicted and dismissed to the prison colony on Devil's Island**

**off the coast of French Guiana. There he would have remained but for the faithfulness of his family and the discovery that the spy was still at work. Next time: A divided France.**

**At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

### Resources

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**Feldman, Egal. *The Dreyfus Affair*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1981.**

**Snyder, Louis. *The Dreyfus Case*. New York, NY: Rutgers University Press, 1973.**

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