**The Dreyfus Affair**

In 1894, Alfred Dreyfus, a high-ranking army officer, was accused of spying for Germany against France. At his military trial, neither Dreyfus nor his lawyer was allowed to see the evidence against him. This was because Dreyfus was Jewish. He was the first Jew to reach such a high position in the army and many were angry about this.

Although Dreyfus proclaimed his innocence, he was convicted and condemned to a life in prison. By 1896, new evidence pointed to another officer, Ferdinand Esterhazy, as the spy. However, the army refused to grant Dreyfus a new trial.

The Dreyfus affair angered many people throughout France. Royalists, ultranationalists, and the Church accused Dreyfus supporters, called the Dreyfusards, of undermining France. However, they argued they were upholding the ideals of justice and equality. In 1898, French novelist Emile Zola joined the battle. In an article titled, *J’ Accuse* (I Accuse), he charged the army and government with suppressing the truth. He was accused of libel, or publishing false statements. He fled into exile.

Finally, thanks to the protests of the Dreyfusards and Zola, Dreyfus was cleared of all his charges and restored his honors. The documents that had been evidence against Dreyfus had been forged.

The Dreyfus Affair reflected the rise of anti-Semitism, or a hatred for Jews, in Europe. While the Enlightenment had spread ideas about religious toleration most Jews struggled to survive in the ghettos of Eastern Europe and the slums of Western Europe. However, those who were successful were often resented. Most anti-Semites were members of the lower middle class who felt angered about their social and economic position. They used the Jews as a scapegoat.

Many Jews wanted to take action to respond to the anti-Semitism. Theodor Herzl, a Hungarian journalist, jumped into action. He called for Jews to form their own separate state where they could have the rights denied to them in European countries. Herzl also launched modern Zionism, a movement devoted to rebuilding a Jewish state in Palestine. Many Jews have kept this dream alive since the Roman destruction of Jerusalem.