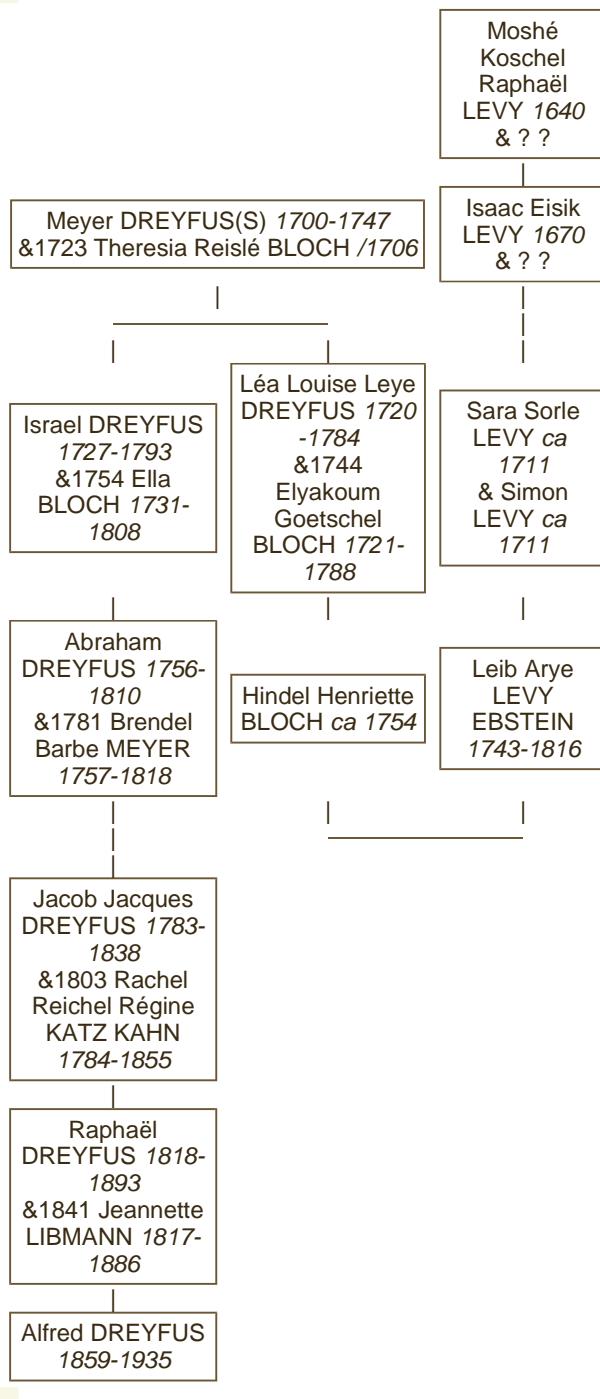




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# Alfred Dreyfus

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Alfred Dreyfus



<b>Naissance</b>	9 octobre 1859 Mulhouse, France
<b>Décès</b>	12 juillet 1935 (à 75 ans) Paris, France
<b>Origine</b>	Français
<b>Allégeance</b>	France
<b>Arme</b>	Armée française, Artillerie
<b>Grade</b>	Lieutenant-colonel
<b>Service</b>	1878 - 1918
<b>Conflits</b>	Première Guerre mondiale
<b>Distinctions</b>	Officier de la Légion d'Honneur Croix de guerre 1914-1918
<b>Hommage</b>	Transfert des cendres envisagé en 2006 au Panthéon

Image : Alfred Dreyfus

**Alfred Dreyfus** (Mulhouse, 9 octobre 1859 - Paris, 12 juillet 1935) était un officier français d'origine alsacienne et de religion juive. Accusé, puis condamné pour trahison avant d'être gracié, puis réhabilité, il fut au cœur d'un conflit social et politique majeur de la III<sup>e</sup> République, appelé l'*Affaire Dreyfus* qui a divisé l'opinion française en deux clans : les Dreyfusards et les Anti-Dreyfusards.

## Biographie

Alfred Dreyfus est né le 9 octobre 1859 à Mulhouse. Il est le dernier des neuf enfants de Raphaël Dreyfus<sup>[1]</sup>, industriel, et de Jeannette Libmann-Weill. Alfred passe son enfance dans la maison familiale rue du Sauvage.

Après l'annexion de l'Alsace-Lorraine par l'Allemagne en 1871, lorrains et alsaciens ont la possibilité de choisir entre la nationalité française ou allemande. En 1872, les Dreyfus optent donc pour la nationalité française et quittent l'Alsace pour Paris. Alfred décide alors de s'engager dans l'armée française, souhaitant voir l'Alsace revenir à la France.

Il entre à l'*École polytechnique* en 1878, devenant officier d'artillerie, et à l'*École de Guerre* en 1890.

La même année, il épouse Lucie Hadamard (23 août 1869-14 décembre 1945), issue d'une famille aisée de diamantaires. Ils ont deux enfants, Pierre Dreyfus (5 avril 1891-28 décembre 1946) et Jeanne Levy Dreyfus (22 février 1893-30 avril 1981).

En 1893, il est attaché à l'état-major de l'armée au Ministère de la Guerre comme capitaine-stagiaire et affecté au célèbre deuxième bureau chargé du renseignement (c'est-à-dire de l'espionnage) dirigé par le commandant Henry.

En 1894, le service de contre-espionnage ("le Bureau de Statistique") dépendant du Ministère de la Guerre, découvre un bordereau contenant des informations sur des secrets militaires français. Celui-ci aurait été transmis à l'ambassade d'Allemagne. Alfred Dreyfus apparaît très rapidement comme le suspect idéal : il travaille à l'état-major, il est artilleur, et a des origines alsaciennes et juives. Il est réputé antipathique. En outre, son écriture comporte des similitudes avec celle du bordereau.



Les deux cases occupées par Dreyfus à l'île du Diable

Le 15 octobre, il est arrêté et incarcéré à la Prison du Cherche-Midi. Il passe en conseil de guerre à Paris le 19 décembre 1894. Il est défendu par un avocat pénaliste talentueux, Edgar Demange, de confession catholique et choisi par son frère Mathieu. Cet avocat tente de démontrer à la Cour, l'insuffisance des charges pesant sur l'accusé, puisque les différentes analyses graphologiques produites se contredisent. Mais, contre toute attente, Dreyfus est condamné à la dégradation et à la déportation quelques jours après, le 22<sup>[2]</sup>. Son cas est évoqué devant la Chambre des Députés et il ne trouve alors aucun défenseur (même en la personne de Jean Jaurès qui le condamne à la tribune).

Alfred Dreyfus est dégradé le 5 janvier 1895 dans la cour d'honneur de l'École militaire de Paris devant une foule furieuse qui crie notamment « À bas le traître, à bas le juif ! ». Cette affaire se situe en effet dans une France gouvernée par des républicains, radicaux, c'est-à-dire nationalistes, anticléricaux et antiroyalistes qui veulent la revanche de la défaite de 1870 avec l'Allemagne et, à cet effet, épurer l'armée (cf. affaire des fiches) et en préserver à tout prix l'honneur (cf. mémoires de Matthieu Dreyfus "l'affaire telle que je l'ai vécu" édition Grasset)

Le 22 février 1895 on embarque Alfred Dreyfus sur le *Ville-de-Saint-Nazaire*, qui amarre à l'île Royale le 12 mars. Gardé en secret total sur l'île Royale, il pose pied sur l'île du Diable cinq jours plus tard. Au début il a une relative liberté de mouvement, quoique fortement suspecté de s'évader, mais en 1896 la rumeur d'une tentative de le faire évader se répand, et les autorités font construire une palissade autour de sa case. Il ne peut plus voir la mer ; il reste confiné à l'intérieur de l'enceinte entourant sa case<sup>[2]</sup>.

Sa santé et son moral empirent drastiquement ; le bagnard Ullmo, qui occupera la case après Dreyfus, dira que celui-ci disait parler aux requins et que ceux-ci venaient à l'appel. Il dort avec l'aide de calmants prescrits par le médecin des îles, écrit à sa femme, à son frère, au président (toute sa correspondance est inspectée minutieusement), et essaie de jardiner un peu sous l'œil attentif des gardes, mais échoue. Il remplit ses cahiers du nom de sa femme, Lucie, et de figures géométriques. Tenu dans l'ignorance complète des avances sur son dossier, il n'essaiera toutefois jamais de s'évader ou de tenter quelconque violence à

l'encontre des autorités du bagne<sup>[2]</sup>.

Le 21 janvier 1896, le lieutenant colonel Georges Picquart, devenu chef du service de renseignements (SR) en juillet 1895, intercepte un document, le « petit bleu », qui ne laisse aucun doute sur les accointances de son auteur, le commandant Esterhazy, avec l'ambassade d'Allemagne, et dont l'écriture est identique à celle du bordereau qui a entraîné la condamnation de Dreyfus. Il découvre par ailleurs que le dossier secret comportant des pièces couvertes par le secret militaire, communiqué au Conseil de guerre pendant le délibéré, à l'insu de la défense, est vide de preuves.

L'Affaire Dreyfus, naît alors, faisant suite à l'acquittement du véritable traître, Ferdinand Waslin Esterhazy, au moment où Émile Zola publie « J'Accuse...! » dans *l'Aurore* du 13 janvier 1898. Il est suivi d'un très médiatique procès en diffamation, à rebondissements, engagé par l'État français, et au terme duquel Émile Zola est condamné au maximum de la peine, le forçant à l'exil en Angleterre. L'Affaire éclate alors au grand jour et divise les grands partis politiques de l'époque en clans dreyfusards et antidreyfusards.



Port Haliguen à Quiberon

Après cassation qui annule le premier jugement pour violation des droits de la défense aux termes d'un arrêt réputé particulièrement audacieux pour l'époque, Alfred Dreyfus est rapatrié pour être jugé par un second conseil de guerre, à Rennes, le 30 juin 1899. Il est de nouveau reconnu coupable de trahison sur la base de nouvelles pièces apparemment extraites du dossier secret, reçoit bizarrement le bénéfice de circonstances atténuantes et condamné à dix ans d'emprisonnement.

Son cas à nouveau évoqué à la Chambre des Députés provoque un scandale dans le cadre de crises ministrielles. Les preuves produites par le Ministre de la Guerre devant la Chambre se révèleront être des faux commis par les militaires. L'auteur de ces fausses pièces, le Colonel Henry, sera emprisonné et se suicidera au lendemain même de sa mise en détention.

Dix jours plus tard dans un climat médiatique délétère, Alfred Dreyfus bénéficie d'une grâce présidentielle. Le 12 juillet 1906 la Cour de cassation saisie d'un recours en révision cassera finalement le jugement de Rennes sans renvoi.

Alfred Dreyfus est réintégré dans l'armée avec le grade de chef d'escadron et reçoit peu après la Légion d'honneur, avec le grade de chevalier. En 1908, il est victime d'un attentat par balles et blessé lors des cérémonies de transfert au Panthéon des cendres d'Émile Zola, son défenseur, auteur du célèbre *J'accuse...!*. Nouvelle injustice, l'auteur de l'attentat sera acquitté.

Il sert pendant la Première Guerre mondiale comme lieutenant-colonel et voit l'Alsace-Lorraine revenir à la France. Une anecdote veut que ce fut lui qui accueillit les deux aviateurs qui avaient détecté le changement de direction de l'armée allemande qui allait déclencher la bataille de la Marne. Il les laisse informer l'état-major malgré son grade supérieur.<sup>[réf. nécessaire]</sup> Il termine la guerre avec le grade d'Officier de la Légion d'Honneur.

Il meurt en 1935 à Paris d'une crise cardiaque à l'âge de 76 ans. Bien que totalement réhabilité, Alfred Dreyfus n'aura pas eu la carrière militaire à laquelle il était destiné, ses états d'avancements étant freinés par l'Affaire mais aussi par le fait qu'il aurait mal admis

en tant que militaire l'allure politique, médiatique et antimilitariste prise par son dossier. Ses amis et défenseurs (cf. infra mémoires de Matthieu Dreyfus) témoignent de relations conflictuelles entre son frère et son entourage (notamment Georges Clemenceau, Emile Zola et le Colonel Picquart entre autres). Il est enterré au cimetière du Montparnasse à Paris.

## Après sa mort

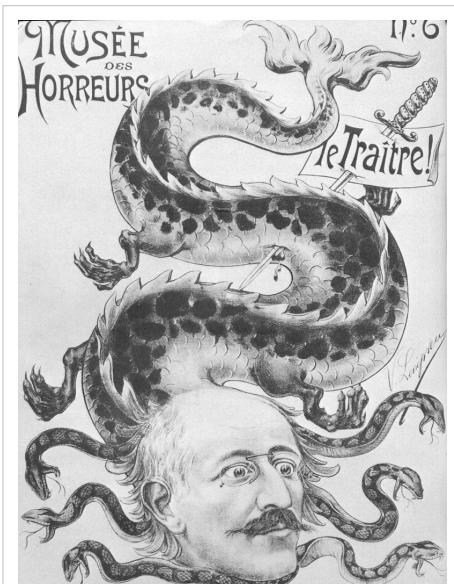
Le transfert de ses cendres au Panthéon fut envisagé, mais Jacques Chirac a indiqué le 5 juillet 2006 y avoir renoncé. En effet, malgré de nombreux soutiens, il a été estimé que Dreyfus était d'abord une victime et que si héros il devait y avoir dans l'Affaire, c'était Zola (déjà au Panthéon). Robert Badinter, le CRIF, la Ligue des Droits de l'Homme sont également de cet avis<sup>[3]</sup>. Le 12 juillet 2006 une cérémonie fut organisée à l'École militaire en présence du président de la République Jacques Chirac entouré du premier ministre et de plusieurs membres du gouvernement en vue de lui rendre un hommage solennel.

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## Voir aussi

- Affaire Dreyfus

# Sources des articles et contributeurs

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