Do you believe that when your trial comes up again in November, you will have to undergo the same harassments as in the past?

Oh no, I don’t think so. After all, we are winning the battle. Dreyfus’s complete rehabilitation is only a matter of time. As for winding up the part that concerns me, we must see how the Chambers decide. I have no reliable information about that. However that may be, I am pleased with what I did. I fought hard; I used my determination in the service of my country. So, my conscience is at rest.

‘Work and determination – they are everything in life.’

‘Indeed, my dear Maitre, you have proved that to us,’ I replied as I took my leave. ‘And that is why we admire you both as a man and as a writer.’

Adolphe Rette, Le XIXe Siècle, 24 October 1899

Letter to the Senate

Senators.
The day on which you so reluctantly voted the law on change of jurisdiction, you committed your initial misdeed. You who are the guardians of the law allowed the law to be subverted by removing a defendant from the jurisdiction of his natural judges, suspected of being judges with integrity. And in fact it was under pressure from the government that you gave in – for the sake of the general good, to soothe troubled spirits, as they told you you would if only you consented to betray justice.

Soothe indeed! Have you forgotten that the day after the decision by the Supreme Court of Appeal, with all Chambers ruling together, agitation resumed, at a bloodier, more violent level? You had dishonoured yourselves for nothing, since the law you had invented just for the circumstances and which, it was hoped, would lead to injustice, instead turned into a triumph for the innocent man. Have you also forgotten that a military tribunal did prove willing, nonetheless, to consummate the supreme iniquity? What a slap in the face for our highest court! And until this offence is made good, the conscience of our nation will have to blush.

Today you are being asked to commit a second misdeed – the last one, the most clumsy and most dangerous one. This time we are not talking about a law on change of jurisdiction. We are talking about a law of strangulation. All you did the first time was change the judges. Now you are being asked to say that there are no longer any judges. You were entrusted with a mission, and History will call your weakness a red cross.

Today the military tribunal did prove willing, nonetheless, to consummate the supreme iniquity. This time we are not talking about a law on change of jurisdiction. We are talking about a law of strangulation. All you did the first time was change the judges. Now you are being asked to say that there are no longer any judges. First you accepted the sordid task of adulterating justice. Now you must declare that justice is bankrupt. And once again they are bludgeoning you with the argument of political necessity. They are wrenching your vote from you in the name of the country’s salvation. They swear that only this evil deed on your part can soothe the nation.

Soothe the nation, indeed! Only truth and justice can achieve that. You will not soothe anyone by doing away with the judges any more than you did by changing them. In fact you will be even farther from soothing troubled spirits, for you will cause society to fall apart even more: you will plunge the country into more lies and more hatred. All this will be but a pitiful and hasty expedient; and the day that that becomes clear, the day so much buried and rotting trash completely poisons the nation and makes it panic, it is you who will be responsible, you who will be guilty. You were entrusted with a mission, and History will call your weakness criminal.

Over two months ago, Senators, when I asked to be heard by your commission, my chief aim was to protest before it against the amnesty bill with which we were being threatened. And today, my only purpose in writing this letter is to protest against the amnesty law, more vigorously, on the eve of the day when you will be called upon to discuss the amnesty law. From my own personal standpoint, I consider this law a denial of justice. From the standpoint of our nation’s honour, I consider it an indelible blot.

Do I need to repeat here what I said to your commission? In the long run one becomes rather tired, and rather ashamed, of repeating the same things over and over. The whole world knows that story and has long since judged it. Only the French can continue to fight over it, in a frenzy of political and religious passion. I said that after having shut me up so abruptly at my trial in Paris with that impudent ‘The question will not be raised’, and after having attempted, at my trial in Versailles, ‘to tighten the screws on Labori’, it was truly a monstrous ploy to refuse me the trial that I have been seeking; I am already indebted to the judges for so many outrages, so many torments and nearly one full year in exile, solely so that truth might triumph. I further said that never had a more unwarranted or more disturbing amnesty flown in the face of the law, for an amnesty is always applied only to misdemeanours and crimes of the same type and only in favour of persons who have been convicted and are already serving their sentence; whereas this amnesty would be applied to the most peculiar ragbag of deeds, of different types, several of which have not even been brought before the courts as yet. And I also said that the amnesty would be applied against us, the upholders of the law, in order to save the real criminals, by shutting our mouths through an act of hypocritical and injurious
clemency and placing decent people in the same category as scoundrels. This is the ultimate in ambiguity. It will destroy whatever is left of the nation's conscience.

Moreover, I was not the only person to say these things that day. Like myself, Colonel Picquart and M. Joseph Reinach had insisted on being heard by your commission. It was then treated to the edifying sight of three men each of whose cases is altogether different from the others and yet who have all been the object of the same expedient—a denial of justice—in an attempt to get rid of them. They did not know each other prior to the Affair. They come from three different spheres. One of them is merely faced with the threat of a court martial; the second is currently on trial in the courts; and the third has been sentenced in absentia to a fine of three thousand francs and a year in prison. But never mind that! Their cases have been lumped together, the same bastard solution has been concocted for all three without any thought for the atrocity situation in which this leaves them—their lives are broken; they are not allowed to clear themselves of the charges brought against them or supply proof of their good faith. Their good names are damaged because they are dismissed along with scoundrels by an infamous parody of justice which tries to disguise an act of universal iniquity and cowardice as a stroke of patriotic magnanimity. Can you really expect these three men not to protest, out of their pain as citizens whose interests have been damaged and out of their love for France, the great country whose worthy sons they believed themselves to be? Of course I still protest and I know that Colonel Picquart and M. Joseph Reinach are protesting along with me, just as they did the day we testified before your commission.

But everyone knows these things, Senators. You know them better, in fact, than anyone else, since you are behind the political scenes, and that is where the whole monstrous undertaking was concocted. Your commission knew these things—and that explains the juridical anguish in which it turned and twisted for so long, and its reluctance to sponsor an unworthy project; only pressure from the government, in the circumstances of which you are aware, succeeded in overcoming that reluctance. You secretly acknowledge, I am certain, that never has there ever been such an accumulation of base acts, falsehoods and crimes, flagrant illegalities and denials of justice. In fact it is that very accumulation of violations and shameful deeds that terrifies you. How can the country be cleansed of it all? How can justice be dispensed to each and every one without ruining the France of the past, without shaking its old foundations and without being forced to rebuild at last the young and glorious France of tomorrow? Even in the firmest minds cowardly thoughts arise: 'There are too many corpses; we'll just dig a hole, bury them quickly and hope that no one will ever talk about them again, and never mind if the stench, as they rot away, seeps through the thin layer of soil that covers them and soon makes the entire country die of the plague.'

That is your line of thought, isn't it? We agree on one point, namely that the disease, rising from the hidden depths of the social body and breaking out in broad daylight, is appalling. We differ only on the way to try to cure the disease. You, as men of government, bury it; you seem to believe that something which is no longer visible no longer exists. Whereas we, as mere citizens, would like to purify the atmosphere immediately, burn what is rotten and do away with the ferment of destruction, so that the body as a whole can recover its health and its strength.

The future will tell who was right.

The story is a very simple one, Senators, but it may be useful to summarize it here briefly.

At the beginning, the Dreyfus Affair was only a matter of justice. There had been a miscarriage of justice and certain citizens, whose hearts were more just and tender than others', no doubt, wished it to be set right. Personally that is all I saw in it at first. But soon, as the monstrous enterprise unfolded, as people higher and higher up were shown to be responsible—the military leaders, the government officials, the men in power—the question took over the entire body politic, turning a cause célèbre into a terrible general crisis in which the fate of France itself seemed to hang in the balance. And so it was that little by little two parties came to blows; on one side, all the reactionaries, all the enemies of the genuine Republic that we ought to have, all those minds which, although they may not realize it, are attracted by authority of any kind, religious, military or political; on the other side, all those who act of their own free will and with thought for the future, all of the minds emancipated by science, all who are drawn towards truth and justice, those who believe in continual progress, whose conquests will one day bring about the greatest possible amount of happiness. And since then the battle has been merciless.

The Dreyfus Affair began in the judicial sphere, and there it should have remained. But it moved into the political sphere, and that is what makes it so venomous. It provided the occasion which suddenly brought to the surface the hidden enterprise of poison and rot at which the enemies of the Republic had been toiling away for thirty years, undermining the regime. Today it is plain for all to see that France—the last of the great Catholic nations to remain powerful and on its feet—was chosen by Catholicism, or I should say by Papism, to restore the declining power of Rome. So it is that an underground campaign began. The Jesuits, not to mention the other tools of religion, seized upon the younger generation with incomparable skill, until one fine morning France—the France of Voltaire, the France which is not yet back in the thrall of the priesthood—woke up to find that it was nonetheless a clerical country in the hands of an administration and a judiciary and an army whose higher ranks take their orders from Rome. Suddenly, deceptive appearances all fell away. We realized that we had
nothing of a Republic except the label, that everywhere we stepped was a minefield, where a hundred years of democratic conquests were on the verge of collapse.

France was about to slip back into the hands of the reactionaries. Hence the fear, hence the warning cry. Hence the state of moral decay into which the cowardice of the Chambers and the government has been letting us sink. Once a chamber or a government is afraid to act, for fear of no longer being on the side of those who will be the masters tomorrow, its downfall is swift and fatal. Imagine men who are in power and who find that they no longer control any of the wheels of state – the obedient civil servants, the military men with their scrupulous discipline, the incorruptible judges. How can action be taken against General Mercier, a liar and a forger, when all the generals show solidarity with him? How can the genuine guilty parties be brought before the courts when everyone knows there are judges who will give them absolution? In a word, how can a government govern honestly when not one civil servant will carry out its orders honestly? Under such circumstances, there would have to be a hero in power, a great statesman determined to save his country, by taking revolutionary action if necessary. And since there are no such men for the moment, we have seen a succession of Ministers take to their heels; powerless and clumsy or, worse still, crooks and accomplices, they have tumbled one after the other as panic-stricken Chambers in the grip of factions have fallen into ignominy, obeying only the narrowest self-interest, heedless of personal concerns.

But that is not all. The worst part and the most painful part is that the foul press was allowed to poison the country, to feed it the most brazen diet of lies, slander, trash and outrageous nonsense and so make the country lose its head. Anti-Semitism was only a crude way to exploit ancestral hatreds and revive religious feeling among a nation of non-believers who had stopped going to church. And nationalism was an equally crude way to exploit the noble love of one’s native country, an abominable, politically motivated tactic which will lead the country straight into civil war the day they have managed to convince one half of the French that the other half is betraying them and selling them to the enemy, simply because that half takes a different view of things. We have seen majorities emerge by claiming that truth was falsehood and justice was injustice. These majorities have even been deaf to all argument; they have condemned a man because he is Jewish and have clamoured for the death of so-called traitors whose only wish has been to salvage the honour of France from the disaster in which a nation has lost its reason.

From that minute on, from the instant it appeared that the country itself was going over to the reactionaries, giving way to a morbid folly, that was the end of whatever little courage the Chambers and the government may have had. Daring to withstand possible future majorities – how could anyone think of any such thing! Although universal suffrage seems so fair and logical, it has a frightful drawback: the instant a man is elected by the people he becomes nothing more than tomorrow’s candidate and hence the people’s slave, so overriding is his need to be re-elected. Thus, when the people suffer an attack of madness such as we are witnessing now, the elected man is at the mercy of that collective madness. He goes along with it if he is not stouthearted enough to think and act as a free man. Hence the painful sight we have been witnessing these past three years: a Parliament that does not know how to use its mandate for fear of losing it, and a government which – having allowed France to fall into the hands of the reactionaries, the people who are poisoning the public – trembles constantly at the thought of being overturned and so makes the worst kinds of concessions to the enemies of the regime it represents, all for the sake of being its master a few days longer.

Aren’t those the very reasons, Senators, that will convince you to make a new concession by decreeing an amnesty? Not one government has dared to pursue the guilty parties in high places, and your amnesty will definitively shield them from punishment. You believe you are saving your skins when you say that the government must be saved from the deadly trap in which its continual weaknesses have caught it. If only some energetic statesman, some ordinary decent man had collared General Mercier as soon as he committed his first crime, everything would long since have been straightened out. But instead, every time justice has backed down, the criminals have naturally grown bolder and bolder, and by now it is true that the pile of filth has grown so disproportionately huge that it would take amazing courage to liquidate the Affair through judicial channels, to the best of France’s interests. No one has that courage. Everyone shudders at the thought of exposing himself to the taunts and insults of the anti-Semites and the nationalists. Everyone has humoured the madness of certain majorities of voters whose minds have been poisoned, so that now you are being forced into yet another act of cowardice. It will be the supreme misdeed. It will turn the country over to the reactionaries. Already they are swaggering more and more boldly.

But don’t you realize what a peculiar tactic it is to bury embarrassing questions? how childish it is to think that that puts an end to them? For three years now I have been hearing the politicians say, whenever they have some interest in believing it, that there is no Dreyfus Affair, or there is no longer any Dreyfus Affair. And yet the Dreyfus Affair continues to follow its logical path; for if there is one thing that is certain, it is this: the Dreyfus Affair will not end until it has been ended. No human power can stop the truth once it is on the march. Today a new wind of panic is blowing and you are terrified, determined to decree once again that there is no more Dreyfus Affair and never again will there be one. You are digging a hole, burying the Affair in it and laying the amnesty on top it; and you hope that
hands in glee. You while the cannibals dance to celebrate the massacre and clap their

And the worst part of it is that you may be quite sincere when you assume that by strangling all hope of justice you will be putting balm on our wounds. It is for the sake of that much-desired balm that you are sacrificing the consciences of honest legislators on the altar of the nation. Ah, you poor souls! You may be naive or you may be merely clumsy egoists; but once again you will dishonour yourselves and all to no avail. What a fine thing your balm is if it requires delivering the Republic over, member after member, to its enemies, in exchange for their silence. Every time they obtain satisfaction, they shout still more loudly and hurl still more insults. You are about to pass that amnesty law for their sake, to save their leaders from being shipped out to a penal colony — and yet they claim it is we who are forcing you to pass it! You are traitors; the Ministers are traitors; the President of the Republic is a traitor. And once you have passed that law you will have done the work of traitors in order to save traitors. Will such balm soothe anyone? I can’t wait to see you, the day after the amnesty is passed: you will have mud slung at you while the cannibals dance to celebrate the massacre and clap their hands in glee.

Can’t you see? Can’t you hear? It was agreed that we would keep quiet, that we would observe a truce and stop talking about the Affair for the duration of the World Fair, but who is it who has been talking about it all this time? Who assaulted Paris during the last municipal elections by reviving the smear campaign and spreading more lies? Who has been dragging the army into this shameful business once again? Who continues to sneak about with secret documents in an attempt to overthrow the government? The Dreyfus Affair has become the dread spectre of the nationalists and the anti-Semites. They cannot reign without it. They need it constantly so as to hold sway over this country through terror. Formerly, in the Wys of the Second Empire, the Ministers got whatever they wanted out of the legislature by brandishing the spectre of revolution: today, they have numbed our poor people’s brains and need only brandish the Affair to plunge them into a stupor. And here is your balm once again: this amnesty of yours will be but one more weapon in the hands of the faction that has exploited the Affair so that Republican France would die of it. That faction will now continue to exploit it all the more since your amnesty will endow ambiguity with the force of law, yet make it impossible for the nation ever to find out which side truth and justice were on.

In such a grave and perilous situation, there was only one right course of action. Accept the struggle against the coalition that united all the forces of the past. Reform the administration, reform the judiciary, and reform the supreme command, since it was clear that all of them were rotten through with clericalism. Enlighten the country with deeds, not words. Tell the whole truth. Render the whole of justice. Put to use the fabulous practical lesson that was emerging to enable the people to take. In just three years, the giant step that now it may need a hundred years to take. Accept at least the need to do battle for the future’s sake, and win as many victories as possible in the interest of our grandeur in days to come. And even today, even though so much cowardice has made the task virtually impossible, there is still only one right course of action. Come back to truth. Come back to justice. For it is certain that only decline and imminent death await any country that stands aloof from truth and justice.

My very dear, great Labori, who was reduced to silence on one of those cowardly occasions I have mentioned, recently had an opportunity to say this, nonetheless, in his superbly eloquent way. Since the government and the politicians have never ceased to interfere in the Affair and to take it out of the hands of the courts, which should have had the sole power to resolve it, then it is the politicians — it is you, Senators — who have the duty to finish it in order to put this nation at peace and further its well-being. I repeat: if you are counting on your pitiful amnesty law to achieve that result, then you are making the wrongs you have done in the past still worse by adding another, a final wrong that may prove fatal and will weigh heavily on your memories.

One source of astonishment to me, Senators, is that we are being accused of wanting to start the Dreyfus Affair all over again. I do not understand. There was a Dreyfus Affair. There was an innocent man tortured by tormentors who knew he was innocent; and thanks to us that Affair is finished as far as the victim himself is concerned. His tormentors have had to restore him to his family, ready to help. They have never doubted his honour, never doubted that his deliverance would come.

Then why would we be trying to start the Dreyfus Affair all over again? That would be pointless and, moreover, would be to no one’s advantage. What we want is this: the Dreyfus Affair must finish in the only way that can restore calm and strength to this country. The guilty parties must be punished, not so that we can rejoice in their punishment but so that the people will know the truth at last and justice can provide the only true and lasting balm. We believe that France’s salvation lies in the victory of the forces of tomorrow over the forces of yesterday, the victory of men of truth
over men of authority. We cannot rest happy until the conclusion of the Affair is justice for all and people have learnt from it the lessons that would help us to found the definitive Republic, provided we carried out every one of the reforms they have shown to be so absolutely necessary.

No, it is not we who are starting the Dreyfus Affair all over again; it is not we who are exploiting it for electoral purposes, not we who are pounding it into the people's heads until they are groggy. We are merely demanding our natural judges. It is our hope that justice for all will quickly bring the truth to light and thus pacify the nation. They say the Affair has done France a great deal of harm; it is a commonplace that the ministers themselves bandy about when they want to secure votes. To which France has the Affair done so much harm? To the France of yesterday? Well then, so much the better! Certainly it is true that all of the old institutions have been shaken up. The Affair has revealed that the old social edifice is rotten, through and through, and the only thing to be done with it now is to tear it down. But why should I mean about the harm the Affair has done to the past if it has done good to the future, if it has made the France of tomorrow a cleaner, healthier place? Never has any fever made the skin break out more visibly with the pustules of disease. That disease must be cured. We are not interested in reviving the Dreyfus Affair. We want to treat the disease whose severity it has revealed and make France well again.

But I am haunted by a graver goal, a pressing need. The amnesty that will bury the Affair, attempting to wind up everything in lies and ambiguity, will have a terrifying result: it will leave us at the mercy of a public revelation by Germany. Several times already I have alluded to this dreadful danger. It should make true patriots shudder and give them sleepless nights. It should make them demand the full and definitive liquidation of the Dreyfus Affair as a measure of public salvation. France's honour depends on it. France's very life depends on it. The time has come, at last, to speak up loud and clear. Very well, speak I shall.

Everyone knows that the many documents which Esterhazy supplied to M. von Schwartzkoppen, the German military attaché, are in Berlin, at the War Ministry. They include all kinds of papers—notes, letters and, among other things, they say, a whole series of letters in which Esterhazy passes, judgement on his superior officers and divulges details from their private lives that are not very pretty. The papers include other bordereaux, by other things, they say, a whole series of letters in which Esterhazy passes, judgement on his superior officers and divulges details from their private lives that are not very pretty. The papers include other bordereaux, by which I mean other lists of documents offered and supplied. Even the least little one of these papers proves that Dreyfus is innocent and that the man our courts martial have acquitted twice, despite the glaring evidence of his crime, is guilty. Well, just suppose that a war breaks out tomorrow between France and Germany! See what an appalling threat would be hanging over us! Before a single shot had been fired, before a single battle had been fought, Germany would release the Esterhazy file, would make it public knowledge, and we would lose the battle there and then, in front of the entire world. We would be helpless to defend ourselves. The respect and trust which our army must place in its leaders would be undermined; the iniquity and cruelty of three of our courts martial would be laid bare; the whole monstrous fabrication would be revealed in broad daylight and the country would collapse. We would be nothing more than a nation of liars and forgers.

I have often shuddered at this presentiment. How can a government that knows be willing to live with such a threat for even a minute? How can it talk about keeping silent, about remaining in the perilous situation we are in, on grounds that the country wants to be soothed? It is beyond understanding. I maintain that it is even a betrayal of this country to fail to shed light on this affair immediately and by every possible means, without waiting for that light to come from abroad, in some thunderbolt revelation. The day the innocent man has been rehabilitated and the guilty parties have been condemned—then and only then will we have shattered the weapon that Germany is brandishing over our heads, because then France, of its own accord, will have acknowledged its error and corrected it.

But now this amnesty comes and closes one of the last doors opening onto the truth. I have said it over and over again: they have refused to hear the one witness who, with a single word, could shed light on the affair, M. von Schwartzkoppen. In the courtroom in Versailles, he would be my chairman, the one who could not possibly refuse to tell the whole truth at last and to support it with documents he has seen with his own eyes. There and nowhere else is where the ultimate solution lies. Sooner or later it will come from that source, and it is folly on our part not to elicit that solution. It would be all to our honour if we did so instead of waiting for the truth to be flung in our faces, in tragic circumstances.

I was stunned, the day I appeared before your commission, when its chairman asked me, on behalf of the Prime Minister, whether I was in possession of some new fact that I could produce at Versailles. It was tantamount to saying that if I couldn't pull the truth out of my pocket, like my handkerchief, I had no choice but to let myself be amnestied, without making so much fuss. Such a question astonished me, coming from the Prime Minister: he knows perfectly well that nobody walks around with the truth in their pocket and that the whole purpose of a trial is to let the truth emerge from questioning, testimony and pleas. And above all, the irony of asking me such a question! After all they have done to keep my mouth shut, to prevent me from establishing the truth, suddenly they were concerned that the truth might be right there in my pocket! I replied to the chairman of your commission that I was in possession of a new fact; that although I was not carrying the truth around with me I knew exactly
where to find it; and that I was simply asking the Prime Minister to urge the Minister of Justice to advise the judge presiding over the court at Versailles not to suspend my rogatory commission when the time came for me to ask it to have M. von Schwartzkoppen questioned. And that would be the end of the Dreyfus Affair, and France would be saved from the most appalling catastrophe.

Now, Senators, go ahead. Pass the amnesty law. Strangle the country. Proclaim, along with Justice Delegorgue, that the question will not be raised. Like Presiding Justice Perivier, tighten the screws on Labori. Then, if France is dishonoured one day in front of the entire world, it will be your doing.

Senators, I am not naive enough to suppose that this letter will make you waver even for one second from your determination (so I suspect) to pass the amnesty law. It is easy to foresee how you will vote, for your vote will be the sequel to your long, long record of weakness and impotence. You tell yourselves that you cannot do anything else because you haven't the courage to do anything else.

I am writing this letter simply for the great honour of having written it. I am doing my duty, and I doubt that you will do yours. The law of change of jurisdiction was a judicial crime. The amnesty will be an act of civic treason. It will hand the Republic over to its worst enemies.

Pass the amnesty law. You will soon be punished for it, and one day it will put you to shame.

L'Aurore, 29 May 1900

Letter to M. Emile Loubet, President of the Republic

Monsieur le Président,

Nearly three years ago, on 13 January 1898, I wrote to your predecessor, M. Félix Faure, a letter which he chose to overlook. That was unfortunate for his reputation. Now that he is dead and gone, his memory is still sullied by the monstrous iniquity of which I warned him and of which he made himself an accomplice by using the full extent of the power which his high office conferred on him to cover up the guilty parties.

Now you are in his place, and now the abominable Affair — after having tainted the whole succession of cowardly or collusive governments — is about to end, for the moment, in a supreme denial of justice, namely the amnesty law that the Chambers, under considerable pressure, have just passed. History will know it as the villainous amnesty. Like the ones before it, your government is sinking down into wrongdoing by accepting the gravest kind of responsibility. Have no doubt about it: an entire page in the book of your life will bear this blot. Your term as President runs the risk of being sullied in the same indelible fashion as the term of the previous President.

Allow me, then, M. le Président, to express the full extent of my anxiety. Now that the amnesty has been passed I shall conclude with this letter, since an earlier letter from me was one of the causes of the amnesty. Yet no one can reproach me with being over-talkative. On 18 July 1898 I left for England. Not until 5 June 1899 did I come back from England, and throughout those eleven months I kept silent. I did not speak again until September 1899, after the trial in Rennes. Then once again I fell into a complete silence which I broke but once, last May, to protest against the amnesty bill then before the Senate. For over eighteen months I have been waiting for justice to take its course; every three months I am subpoenaed, and every three months my case is postponed until the next session. It has been deplorable and comical. And today, instead of justice, we have this villainous and offensive amnesty. I believe I have a right and a duty to speak up: I have been a good citizen, after all, keeping silent, not wanting to be in the way or make any trouble, waiting so patiently, counting on the system of justice that has proved to be so slow.

I repeat: I must conclude. The first phase of the Affair — what I will call the full crime of it — is now coming to an end. I am duty-bound to take stock of the situation, to state what we have achieved and what we are confident the future will bring, before I fall silent once again.

I need not go back to the very first abominations in this Affair. I need only resume with the events that have followed that appalling decision in Rennes, that act of provocation and insolent iniquity which made the entire world shudder. This, M. le Président, is where your government — and consequently you yourself — began to commit misdeeds.

I am sure that one day — with documents to back them up — people will tell what happened in Rennes. By that I mean the way your government allowed itself to be deceived and then felt obliged to betray us. The Ministers were convinced that Dreyfus would be acquitted. How could they have had any doubts on that score, since the Supreme Court of Appeal believed it had boxed in the court martial with the terms of a ruling so clear that his innocence was obvious, without any need for discussion? Why would they have worried in the slightest, when their subordinates and intermediaries and witnesses and even the persons involved in the drama were promising...