The press was one of the most important actors throughout the Dreyfus Affair. In organizing the Lorraine Beitler Collection a distinction has been drawn between periodica and newspapers. The latter may be considered serials but on three counts differ from the periodicals discussed earlier. Here, newspapers are signified by scale (a larger format than the magazine type of publication included above), by a tendency to rely more on textual than visual communication, and for their daily periodicity. The categories of periodica and newspapers are closely related—many of the remarks made above in regard to the former hold true for newspapers.

One of the glorious centerpiece in discussions of the history of the Affair is Zola's open letter to President Faure published in L'Aurore on January 13, 1898. (P.Au.1). L'Aurore (littéraire, artistique, sociale), directed by Ernest Vaughan, was the great dreyfusard newspaper whose virtual raison d'être became the public debate over the case. Founded as a political daily only in October 1897, the paper was rapidly transformed under pressure of events into the major dreyfusard organ under the political editorship of Georges Clemenceau. A large-format daily, the paper was only occasionally illustrated. "J'Accuse....!" is accompanied by several other issues in the collection: Zola's later letter to President Brisson, the author's response to personal attacks on his father, and the obituary issue published in October 1902.

L'Aurore's companion in arms was Le Siècle under the guide of its editors, Yves Guyot and Joseph Reinach. The issue devoted to "Les Mensonges de la photographie" in January 1899 is an extraordinary demonstration of the satirical possibilities of photography and looks forward to the montage techniques of the twentieth century. (P.sc.1). Other issues of this important newspaper include the announcement of the homage to Lucie Dreyfus by an association of Brazilian women, various articles and statements by Guyot and Zola, and a supplement which surveys the international caricatural interest in the Affair. (P.sc.2, P.sc.8). The organ of Jaurès and Reinach, La Petite République is also represented in the collection and includes a number of the articles later published as Les Preuves by Jaurès. (P.PR.1-5).

Several organs made a speciality not only of being antidreyfusard but also of being chronically antisemitic: La Libre Parole is the notorious example, but among the others the Catholic newspaper La Croix was particularly significant because of its influence nationwide in France. (See P.Cro.1, P.Cro.2).

The wide interest of the American press from the end of 1897 and the explosion of concern following the intervention of Zola in some sense represents the spectacular desire for sensational news, understandable for a time when the two giants of modern reporting, Pulitzer (New York World) and Hearst (New York Journal) were vying for position in this arena. The American response, however, appears more generally liberal than that which is evident, for comparison, in Britain where deeply entrenched conservatism still held sway. From all corners of the States the trials and disturbances in Paris and Rennes were reported with editorial commentary indicative of wide sympathy for the innocent man. Antisemitism was condemned by all—and was accompanied by criticism of the obsolete and unjust methods of the French legal system and growing estimation of Zola's sacrifice for love of Truth and Justice:

"Zola Witnesses Cause Sensations. Writing Experts Say Esterhazy Was Guilty. Testify in Strong Terms Regarding the Bordereau. Declare That the Major Was the Man Who Wrote the Paper."
San Francisco Chronicle, Wednesday, February 16, 1898.

Superior Leader (Wisconsin) Thursday, February 24, 1898.

"Foes of Dreyfus Testify. Army Chiefs Who Sent Him to Cayenne Fierce As Ever Against Him."

"Justice may Fail. Dreyfus' Judges Are Subjected to Illegitimate Influences."
Sunday Inter Ocean (Chicago) August 20, 1899.

"Military Clan combines to Hit Dreyfus."

"Dreyfus is Convicted. Five French Army Officers Condemn an Innocent Man to Satisfy the Vanity of a Few Generals. Visible Curse Descends Upon France. Distracted and Degenerate Nation Faces the Most Terrible Crisis in All Her Bloody History."
Sunday Inter Ocean, September 10, 1899.

"How Justice has been defeated. Success of a Conspiracy Which Has Attracted World-Wide Attention."
Sunday Inter Ocean, September 10, 1899.

"Many Hebrews and Christians to Boycott Paris. Great Movement is Growing. Meetings to be Held in New York, Louisville and Other Places to Protest Verdict."

Selected Works Catalogue (2002)