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# The 'Government Intellectuals': Nicolas Politis – An Intellectual Portrait

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## Abstract

*This article sketches an intellectual portrait of Nicolas Politis (1872–1942), a liberal Greek jurist and a naturalized Frenchman of the interwar period. The main lines of his thought's evolution and his socio-political engagement over the course of his life are considered typical of a new type of intellectual, the 'government intellectual', who appeared on the international scene at the beginning of the 20th century. The profile of the 'government intellectual', proposed to study his career, is closely tied to the scholar's discourse concerning politics. It allows one to observe the emergence of a space of intellectual production and of institutional positions, relatively autonomous vis-à-vis specifically national considerations, but always in the service of their interests, which were in liberal thought conceived as consistent with the interests of international society. The richness of his career allows one to consider the intellectual engagement of jurists in new terms, by closely associating the strategies of individual actors with the various contexts that they had themselves contributed to creating.*

## 1 Government Intellectuals

According to the classical definition formulated by Pascal Ory and Jean-François Sirinelli, the intellectual is defined, not by his function, but rather by his involvement in the political field, understood in the sense of the debate over the *cit *.<sup>1</sup> According to Gerard Noiriel in *Les fils maudits de la R publique*, the division of labour in France led to the separation of the scholar and the politician during the Third Republic. This, in

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<sup>1</sup> P. Ory and J.-F. Sirinelli, *Les intellectuels en France. De l'affaire Dreyfus   nos jours* (2002), at 15.

turn, freed up a space in public debate that, with the Dreyfus Affair, came to be occupied by three new intellectual figures. By order of their entry upon the public stage, these were: the revolutionary intellectual, the government intellectual, and the specific intellectual. These figures differed among themselves with regard to the degree to which they thought they could guide the behaviour of men of action as well as the manner in which they sought to do so. Noiriél's model can be applied to examine a type of intellectual who emerged on the international scene during the interwar period: the 'government intellectual' engaged at the international level. This type of intellectual was often a reformist who did not believe that one could improve the condition of people's lives by force or by overturning the social order. 'Government intellectuals' urged debate and reasoned argument and sought to make themselves useful by drawing upon their academic skills to enlighten opinion and guide the actions of statesmen. Most often, they were scholars involved in already existing international political or scholarly institutions or the new bodies created in the years immediately preceding and following World War I. Independent academic actors accredited by various states as diplomats, experts, arbiters, and even political representatives, the multiple competences of 'government intellectuals' gave them the resources with which to accomplish their objective: to strengthen the relations between the elites so as to draw the scholarly and political worlds closer together. During the interwar years, they even attempted to persuade policy-makers that scientific expertise could be an effective tool in the service of international government. Their conferences, international scholarly institutions, and the reviews they founded or to which they contributed were conceived as bridges responsible for ensuring the circulation of elites and ideas at the international level.<sup>2</sup>

The intellectual profile of Nicolas Politis, a Greek jurist and a naturalized Frenchman, is typical of the new type of government intellectual who appeared on the international scene at the beginning of the 20th century. Before considering his career, a word must first be said regarding the place of French jurists in the intellectual configuration of the time. The historiography has little to say about the social and political role of jurists or their modes of public action. This absence is explained by a number of circumstances, including the relative sobriety of the legal field, the conservative tendencies of jurists as a group, the absence of 'intellectual' engagement among them during the Dreyfus Affair, and a habit of viewing jurists as technicians rather than scholars. Moreover, the marginal place held by legal theory in French instruction together with law professors' limited publications broadly contributed to the seclusion of French law in the 19th century and the decline of the jurist's social role. The absence of legal scholarship in civic, cultural, and intellectual debates came to an end at the turn of the 20th century as the need to adapt to new social realities gave rise to the era of experts, leading a group of internationalists to create a relatively autonomous scholarly space via the creation of the first international law associations. After the war, these international centres of scholarship were transformed into centres for

<sup>2</sup> G. Noiriél, *Les fils maudits de la République* (2008).

creating sociologically informed legal ideologies, thus ushering in the dynamic return of jurists to the public sphere. They were no longer merely the technical assistants of political life, but rather leading actors in the creation of social reformist ideologies. For the first time, legal theorists dealt with the foremost theoretical issues, which had until then been exclusively reserved for the 'noble' disciplines of history and philosophy: the effectiveness of legal norms, the interpretation of rules of law, the state submitted to law, the guarantee of individual and collective liberties, and the relationship between law and morality.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 Politis' Intellectual Profile: A Synthesis of Order and Liberty

Nicolas Politis' intellectual profile can only be understood through the study of three important dimensions of his career: his legal training and academic career in the context of the French republican state; his involvement as a statesman or political representative of the Greek state in the early 20th century; finally, his efforts as a diplomat and jurist in the framework of international legal, scholarly, and political institutions and, above all, the League of Nations, to create a system of collective security.

Politis' legal training in France and his relatively short-lived academic career in the late 19th century coincided with a crisis of legitimacy of the republican state. The separation of the scholar and the politician via the 1896 university reform of the Third Republic and the centralization of the state promoted by the same regime led to the creation of a new elite of specialists devoted to its cause. Moreover it facilitated the emergence of power networks upon which the leaders of the Republic were later constantly to draw in governing.<sup>4</sup> Politis pursued his studies in Paris at two institutions that jointly trained the ruling elite: on the one hand, the Faculté de Droit de Paris and, on the other, the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques. These two institutions were the specific expression of the transformations that characterized the new forms of political domination.<sup>5</sup> The political engagement of jurists in France during the period stretching from 1870 to 1914 was so extensive that Yves Gaudemet could speak of a 'Jurists' Republic'. Many at the time thought that the country's politics were a purely legal affair and that the framework of the Republic could be surrendered to legal experts, with the law handling the task of resolving social contradictions. As privileged intermediaries in social relations, with close ties to ordinary people as well as those in power thanks to their training, jurists directly participated in the construction of this ideology and its diffusion within society.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> M. Millet, *Les professeurs de droit citoyens. Entre ordre juridique et espace public, contribution à l'étude des interactions entre les débats et les engagements des juristes français (1914–1995)*, political science doctorate thesis, université Paris II (2000), i, at 4–6.

<sup>4</sup> Noiriel, *supra* note 2, at 43. See also C. Charle, *Les Élités de la République, 1880–1900* (1987).

<sup>5</sup> J. Gatti-Montain, *Le système d'enseignement du droit en France* (1987), at 131–132.

<sup>6</sup> Y.-H. Gaudemet, *Les juristes et la vie politique de la IIIe République* (1970), at 20.

A naturalized French citizen, Politis was part of a group of French internationalists who, driven by the desire to create a genuine science of international law independent of the exegetical school that had hitherto dominated French law, gathered round Luis Renault in the first decade of the 20th century.<sup>7</sup> Renault conceived of international law as the professional technique of those who looked after international affairs. Drawing on the economic and sociological arguments of the Third Republic's educational reform movement, Renault hoped, on the one hand, to construct solid bases for the new discipline of international law and, on the other, to justify the profession and role of internationalist professors. On the assumption that international law can be technically studied like any other area of law, the origin of the first of Politis' publications on contemporaneous subjects of international legal interest must above all be sought in the *Revue Général de Droit International Public* (RGDIP), which had been established in 1894 on the initiative of Luis Renault. Politis' studies examined the rules of international law, including those governing war, a phenomenon which, he wrote in 1898, 'n'est pas malheureusement près de disparaître'.<sup>8</sup> In the same spirit are to be classified the publication of such works as *La Guerre gréco-turque au point de vue de Droit International* (1898), the *Manuel de la Croix Rouge* (together with Paul Fauchille), and the famous three-volume *Recueil des Arbitrages Internationales*, which Politis published in collaboration with De Lapradelle (having inspired these last, Renault also supplied their prefaces). According to De Lapradelle, these books were written 'dans l'esprit des élites scientifiques républicaines . . . Pénétrés de la force des méthodes historiques, [the authors] se tournent vers les indications du passé pour chercher l'élaboration de l'avenir'.<sup>9</sup> A member of the Institut de Droit International, Politis aligned himself with Renault with respect to the importance of studying international jurisprudence and the role to be played by international jurists in the construction of a rational diplomatic system among European states, one based on law and legality. An international community of legal scholars began to form round the Institut de Droit International and the Association de Droit International. Their symbol was *Justitia et Pace* and they proclaimed themselves the legal conscience of the civilized world.<sup>10</sup>

The famous slogan, 'paix par le droit', referring to the practice of substituting, as is done within societies, recourse to impartial third parties for the use of force, led Politis to reflect on the notion of arbitration (formerly considered a diplomatic expedient) and on its new status as an institution of international justice in its own right. Politis, who had closely followed the second Hague Conference, observed a tendency towards substituting the diplomacy of law – with its recourse to direct agreements, third party brokered reconciliation, and use of the legal instrument of arbitration – for the diplomacy of force, which saw the realist policy of alliances and the balance of power as the guarantee of peace.<sup>11</sup> According to Politis, arbitration belongs to the legal domain and

<sup>7</sup> M. Koskenniemi, *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870–1960* (2001), at 274–283.

<sup>8</sup> Politis, 'Preface', in N. Politis, *La guerre gréco-turque au point de vue de droit international* (1898).

<sup>9</sup> A.G. La Pradelle and N. Politis, *Recueil des arbitrages internationaux* (1954), iii, at 9.

<sup>10</sup> Politis, 'L'Institut de Droit International', *Revue de la Paix* (1908), at 280.

<sup>11</sup> Politis, 'L'avenir de la médiation', 17 RGDIP (1910) 136, at 136–137.

not to that of politics or diplomacy; it is only on this condition that it can inspire confidence in governments and peoples and offer guarantees to small states, which are often at risk of falling victim to political considerations. The operation of arbitration nevertheless always depends on the goodwill of the disputing governments. Making it obligatory was closely tied to the more general question of obedience to international law or the reconciliation of state sovereignty with necessary submission to legality.

The response to this question was revealed to Politis in 1901, the year Léon Duguit's *Traité de Droit Constitutionnel* was published. The emergence of socialist ideas and a collective radical liberalism on the political scene profoundly affected the legal science of the time. Durkheim's notion of human solidarity, which was introduced into legal science by Duguit, had already opened the path to the synthesis between liberty and justice that France had been seeking in the republican moment and which distinguished it (in point of the role of the state and its relationship to society) from the political models of its two great neighbours: the authoritarianism of the German Empire and the liberalism of the United Kingdom.<sup>12</sup> Popularized in 1896 by Léon Bourgeois, the notion of human solidarity was central to the preoccupations of France's political and scholarly elites and became a key instrument in Politis' legal theory. Profoundly influenced by the ideas of Duguit, Politis developed his doctrine after World War I in *Les nouvelles tendances du droit international* (1927) and his course at the Hague Academy on *Le problème des Limitations de la Souveraineté et la Théorie de l'Abus des Droits dans les Rapports Internationaux* (1925). He believed that, in the last analysis, the problem that needed to be resolved at all levels was that of the harmonious synthesis of order and liberty. In civil society, the individual needed to be put in his true place in such a way that the pre-eminence of the general interest was respected but without falling into state despotism. While the latter should be accorded all necessary authority, it should not be allowed to infringe upon the personal liberties of citizens. At the international level, the community of states requires leadership, just like any other society. States must accept limitations on their independence, restrictions on their sovereignty, and submission to the law. International law must no longer be founded on the supposed creative will of states. For Politis, the true subjects of international law (and, indeed, all law) are diverse groups of individuals related by ties of solidarity. The individual thus plays an essential role in international relations. 'Si entre membres de divers groupements nationaux, il s'établit un lien de solidarité assez fort, il en naîtra des usages moraux ou économiques, qui se transformeront en normes juridiques internationales, dès qu'il apparaîtra aux individus appartenant à ces groupements que leur solidarité et leur sentiment de la justice seraient gravement compromis si elles n'étaient pas sanctionnées par une force matérielle de contrainte.'<sup>13</sup>

The reduction of the idea of states to that of social groups such as they are encountered in the framework of a given society (e.g., workers) led to the same reflections that

<sup>12</sup> M.C. Blais, *La solidarité, Histoire d'une idée* (2007), at 317–318.

<sup>13</sup> Politis, 'L'influence de la doctrine de Léon Duguit sur le développement du droit internationale', *Archives de Philosophie du droit et de la Sociologie juridique*, nos 1–2 (1932), at 71. For Leon Duguit's doctrine see N. Hakim and F. Melleray, *Le renouveau de la doctrine française* (2009), at 215–262.

occupied the French intellectuals of the Third Republic. Politis' theory responded to strong demands for a programme of reform which would facilitate the integration of the various groups or collective societies while preventing one group from dominating the others. On the international scene, the reconciliation of individual liberty with social justice took the form of an effort to create a system of collective security that could prevent one national group from dominating another through warfare. The rules of solidarity, according to Politis, '*imposeront aux gouvernants des groupements envisagés un double devoir: celui de collaborer, en l'absence d'une autorité supérieure à la leur, en vue de créer des services publics internationaux et celui de mettre, en absence d'une force publique internationale, leurs forces particulières au service de la sanction requise*'.<sup>14</sup>

In the relatively autonomous context of the international scene, the role of government intellectuals was of particular importance. They could serve as agents for the realization of the type of inter-governmental collaboration mentioned above. More particularly, these intellectuals could work to strengthen the ties between international scholarly and political elites via the creation of international scholarly and political institutions in the service of individuals. According to Politis' theory, the *rapprochement* of the elites of the various national governments would help them become conscious of the strong solidarity existing between them and their duty to guarantee the global social order through a system of collective security, providing for sanctions against state groups that commit excesses of power. The involvement of jurists as government intellectuals and agents of international order is of special interest, given the fact that they were at the heart of relations between the legal and political spheres. In the absence of the authority of a sovereign state possessing a monopoly on legitimate violence within its jurisdiction, a portion of internationalist jurists undertook the task of substituting another authority, that of the law.<sup>15</sup>

Renault's work as jurisconsult at the Quai d'Orsay, his central role in the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907, and his contribution as an international arbiter and pioneer in the development of international institutions (which he anticipated would come together into a peaceful system for organizing the world) profoundly inspired his disciple Politis, who was to follow the example of his master's multiple and often simultaneous engagements. In 1912, he accompanied Greek Prime Minister Eleutherios Venizelos as a technical delegate for Greece to the international conferences in London and Bucharest that brought an end to the Balkan wars. Doing so entailed a return to his nationality of birth. Politis' entry into the politics of the Greek state in 1914 marked the end of his academic career in France and was closely bound up with the Liberal Party and its distinguished founder, Eleutherios Venizelos, who dominated the Greek political scene from 1910 almost until his death in 1936. The Liberal Party represented the new economic forces that had emerged at the end of the nineteenth century (entrepreneurs, workers, and rural populations). These demanded

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, at 71. For Politis' doctrine see also R. Kolb and A. Truyol y Serra, *Doctrines sur le fondement du droit des gens* (2007).

<sup>15</sup> Sacriste and Vauchez, 'Les "bons offices" du droit international: la construction d'une autorité non politique dans le concert diplomatique des années 1920', 26 *Critique internationale* (2005) 101.



a redistribution of national territory and that their social and political rights be guaranteed. The work of the Venizelos government was therefore characterized by an effort to reconstruct and democratize the Greek state in keeping with western models of state organization. With Greece's rapid territorial expansion, the result of two Balkan wars (1912–1913), the integration of new populations to obtain national homogeneity became a priority for the Liberal government, as many ethnic minorities resided in the newly acquired regions. Moreover, differences of economic structure and legislative and administrative organization between the Old State and the New Lands had to be overcome.<sup>16</sup> Politis participated in the reformist effort by assuming the functions of director in charge of reorganizing the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1914. The National Schism that took place in 1915, due to the disagreement between Venizelos and King Constantine over the subject of Greece's participation in the War and the resulting debate over the principles of liberalism versus absolutism gave Politis a new terrain for reflection. He supported Venizelos and Greece's participation alongside the Allies and opposed the royalist stance in favour of neutrality: '*d'un part le sort de la Belgique mettait en cause l'existence de tous petits pays . . . de l'autre part la Grèce pouvait achever son établissement national par la libération des populations grecques d'environ deux millions qui se trouvaient encore en Turquie*'.<sup>17</sup> These initial reasons for opposing his country's neutrality were to be further developed over the course of his career. In 1934, with war banished and the question of the definition of the aggressor at the heart of his preoccupations, Politis published *La Neutralité et la Paix*, where he developed his theory that neutrality is a product of international anarchy, an uncontrolled right of war, and is unthinkable in an organized community. According to Politis, international solidarity implies that neutral powers are economically and commercially involved in conflicts to nearly the same point as the belligerents.

Politis' involvement in the peace conference that followed the First World War was in large measure focused on organizing Greece's intense propaganda campaign to claim territory from its neighbours. Greek interests aligned with the general interest, and above all with those of Europe. '*La satisfaction des aspirations helléniques est conforme à l'intérêt général: il est bon qu'il y ait une Grèce de huit à neuf millions d'habitants, capable de remplir son rôle historique de poste avancé de la civilisation occidentale aux confins de l'Europe contre les recours offensifs de la barbarie musulmane et asiatique*'.<sup>18</sup> At the same time, Politis also served on the Commission on Responsibility of the Authors of the War and on Enforcement of Penalties, where he questioned the right of immunity accorded to heads of state and presented his first thoughts concerning an international

<sup>16</sup> G.T. Mavrogordatos, *Stillborn Republic, Social Coalitions and Party Strategies in Greece 1922–1936* (1983), at 280.

<sup>17</sup> Nicolas Politis' Personal Archives (APNP) (League of Nations Archives, Geneva), 208/3, *Mes mémoires*. For the Greek participation in World War I see G. Leontaritis, *Greece in World War I (1917–1918)* (2000).

<sup>18</sup> Politis, 'Les Aspirations nationales de la Grèce', in N. Politis, *La Paix des peuples* (1919), at 18. For the Greek participation at the Paris Peace Conference see N. Petsalis-Diomidis, *Greece at the Paris Peace Conference* (1978). See also D. Kitsikis, *Propagande et pressions en politique internationale. La Grèce et ses revendications à la Conférence de la Paix (1919–1920)* (1963).

criminal system created to try individuals.<sup>19</sup> Politis' propagandistic efforts during the years 1922–1930 concentrated on improving the image and foreign relations of Greece, which had been severely damaged by the unfortunate war in Asia Minor and the vast wave of refugees that followed as a result of the obligatory exchange of Christian and Muslim populations. Appointed Greek Ambassador to Paris in 1924, he drew upon his network of acquaintances by organizing banquets to promote Greek civilization in France. For Politis, the peace agreements between Greece and Turkey in 1930, the stabilization of frontiers, and the ethnic homogeneity that resulted from obligatory population exchange represented the perfect example of pacification based on the notion of solidarity or the interdependence of two countries.

Nicolas Politis' efforts to create a system of collective security that would ensure peace and world order was reflected in his intense activity in the framework of the League of Nations and the many international scholarly institutions of the time. The little circle of specialists to which Politis belonged and which gravitated round the Institut de Droit International redoubled its efforts after receiving considerable financial aid from the Carnegie Endowment for Peace on the eve of the war in recognition of its support for the idea of a peace guaranteed by law. This fact led to the internationalization of this hitherto exclusively European group of jurists by bringing them to the attention of the internationalists on the other side of the Atlantic, representatives of the pacifist and Christian humanitarian ideas then dominant in the United States. A tireless supporter of the League of Nations, Politis was part of the elite group of politicians and intellectuals who led this organization created to defend the cause of peace. Little networks of sociability, created between Paris and Geneva, began to put men of action eager to reform society into contact with intellectuals who wished to reconcile knowledge and power.<sup>20</sup> Financial support for various established and recently created scholarly bodies and institutions, whether they be scientific reviews<sup>21</sup> or scholarly associations,<sup>22</sup> opened up a space for a type of international scholarly production that was relatively independent *vis-à-vis* diplomatic disputes and the various national academic scenes.<sup>23</sup> The authority of the law, as a realistic and effective science of international government, found its expression in what was to become these scholars' foremost preoccupation, the effort to 'outlaw war' or '*mise de la guerre hors-la-loi*'.<sup>24</sup> Though they had represented the ordinary procedure for resolving disputes for the better part of human history, recourse to force and the 'competence

<sup>19</sup> For the minutes of the Commission on Responsibility of the Authors of the War and on Enforcement of Penalties see BDIC archives, GFA 146/6.

<sup>20</sup> F. Chaubet, *Histoire intellectuelle de l'entre-deux-guerres* (2006), at 233–234.

<sup>21</sup> RGDIP, *Revue de Droit International et de Législation Comparés*, AJIL, *Journal de Genève*, *L'œuvre*, *L'Europe nouvelle*, *La paix par le Droit*, *l'Esprit International*, etc.

<sup>22</sup> *Institut universitaire des Hautes Études Internationales*, *Union Juridique Internationale (UJI)*, *Permanent Court of International Justice*, *The Hague Academy of International Law*, etc.

<sup>23</sup> Sacriste and Vauchez, 'La guerre hors-la-loi, 1919–1930. Les origines de la définition d'un ordre politique internationale', 151–152; *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* (2004) 91, at 95.

<sup>24</sup> P.-M. Dupuy, *Droit International Public* (2006), at 565. See also R. Kolb, *Ius contra bellum, Le droit international relatif au maintien de la paix* (2009).



of war' would, it was hoped, cease to be legal. The notion of arbitration came of age in Politis' theoretical reflections. In 1924, he published *La justice internationale*, where he developed the ideas of extending obligatory arbitration, placing individuals under international jurisdiction, and trying war crimes. In the same year, he, together with Benès, drafted the *Geneva Protocol*, which introduced the 'Arbitration-Security-Disarmament' formula for the creation of a system of collective security and anticipated an obligatory system for resolving disputes.

The international collaboration of elites seemed to Politis the only way to prevent a new conflict in the years preceding World War II. In the wake of the occasion of Japanese aggression in China in 1938, Politis observed that the radical change necessary to preserving the peace was to be found in the union of elites.<sup>25</sup> '*La tache des classes dirigeantes et en général des élites se borne à déblayer la voie de la collaboration . . . ce n'est pas seulement pour des élites un devoir national. C'est aussi une question d'intérêt bien compris.*'<sup>26</sup> Politis, like many liberal theorists, explained the Geneva Project's failure to guarantee world peace in terms of faulty reasoning and a moral and social crisis. With Herbert Kraus and Max Huber, he was among the authors who analysed the concrete requirements of international morality.<sup>27</sup> In *Morale Internationale*, a book published in 1947, Politis attempted to adapt the theory of social morality to the field of international relations. It was not the first time he had done so. In 1932, he raised the following question at the Institut du Droit International concerning the system of peacetime reprisals: '*[c]onviendrait-il d'y indiquer que l'exercice du droit de représailles est limité par les lois ou par la morale sociale?*' By examining all points of the relationship between morality and law, which was itself rather obscure, Politis sought to advise modern politicians about the importance of observing social morality in the relations between states.<sup>28</sup>

### 3 The European Federative Idea

The idea of integrating dominant social groups is, in Politis' thought, closely tied to the federative idea. The federative idea had already interested Politis in the totally different context of 1898, when he contemplated a sort of Confederation of Nations under the aegis of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>29</sup> After World War I, the idea of a universal federation administered by professionals reached its apogee with the creation of the League of Nations. Nevertheless, the failure of the projects for general entente

<sup>25</sup> Archives Privées de Nicolas Politis (APNP), 226/126, *L'agression japonaise et la S.D.N.*, by C. Bernard, 1 Aug. 1938.

<sup>26</sup> APNP, 229/139, 29/05/1940, Politis conference in *Opéra Mundi*, 'Aspects de la vie Internationale, De la méfiance à l'amitié'.

<sup>27</sup> Truyol y Serra, 'Cours général de droit international public', 173 *RCADI* (1981) 74.

<sup>28</sup> A.G. Lapradelle, *Maitres et doctrines du droit des gens* (1950), at 387–388. See also Lapradelle, 'Chronique Internationale: Nicolas Politis et la Vie internationale', *Cahiers du Monde Nouveau* (1945) 323. For Politis' opinion about peacetime reprisals see Politis, 'Les représailles entre États membres de la Société des Nations', 31 *RGDIP* (1924) 5.

<sup>29</sup> Politis, *supra* note 8, at 169–170.

conceived in Geneva in 1923–1924 obliged European states to withdraw into themselves at a time when the universalist ambition had shown itself incapable of effectively guaranteeing European security. Politis at this time declared that '[I]orsque la solidarité est un fait social, elle ne se manifeste pas de même manière dans tous les rapports parce qu'elle ne lie pas avec la même force tous les états. On conçoit qu'il puisse y avoir, à côté d'une solidarité générale, liant tous les états, une solidarité particulière entre états d'une même région, d'un même continent, d'une même civilisation.'<sup>30</sup> Politis' theory found support in the success of the Locarno Treaties, which were greeted by liberal jurists as the first step towards a Union of all the nations of Europe. Based on a harmony of interests among states of the same region rather than a balance of power between them, Locarno's success led Politis and other thinkers of the period to hope that other schemes of regional organization might produce the same results.<sup>31</sup> 'Le système des alliances est discrédité', wrote Politis in 1926 for the review, *Paix par le Droit*. 'La véritable voie semble être celle qui vient d'être suivie à Locarno: un Pacte balkanique dans le cadre de la Société des nations et dans l'esprit du Protocole de Genève. ...Le jour ou le Pacte balkanique s'ajoutera à celui de Locarno, l'Europe presque entière aura virtuellement réalisé le grand programme de Genève.'<sup>32</sup> Indeed, with his active participation, the Balkan Pact between Greece, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Turkey was signed in 1934. According to Politis, it 'pourra devenir, dans cette partie de l'Europe, le noyau d'une fédération régionale susceptible de s'intégrer ultérieurement dans une large Confédération Européenne'.<sup>33</sup> The European idea to which the Locarno Accords had given rise reached its apogee in 1929, with the announcement of Aristide Briand's project for the creation of a European Union at the Assembly of the League of Nations. This resulted in extensive discussion across the continent. A large number of books, articles, and studies were published on the question. Specialist reviews, such as the *Revue Politique et Parlementaire*, the *Revue Générale de Droit International Public*, and the *Revue de Droit International et des Sciences Diplomatiques et Politiques*, closely followed the debate over the idea of a European Union and contributed a theoretical dimension that had until then been absent from the discussion. International scholarly associations also took up the European idea. The UJI and the Academy of International Law of the Hague brought together jurists, for the most part, from the Paris law faculty, including Joseph Barthélemy, Albert Geouffre de Lapradelle, Louis Le Fur, Fernand Larnade, Boris Mirkine-Gézévić, René Cassin, Yves de la Brière, Jacques Lambert, Georges Scelle, the Chilean Alejandro Alvarez, and Nicolas Politis. All rallied to the European idea and worked to elaborate the bases for a European federation.<sup>34</sup> After 1930, Coudenhove-Kalergi's *Le Paneurope*,

<sup>30</sup> APNP, 229/147. Politis' conference at the Faculty of Law of Lisbon, 3 and 5 Nov. 1941, 'Le grand problème du XXe siècle, la synthèse de l'ordre et de la liberté, aspects politiques et sociaux'.

<sup>31</sup> E. Carr, *The Twenty-Years' Crisis 1919–1939* (2001), at 151.

<sup>32</sup> Politis, 'La Question d'Orient', *La Paix par le Droit* (May 1926), at 192.

<sup>33</sup> APNP, 229/139, 29/05/1940. Politis' conference in *Opéra Mundi*, 'Aspects de la vie Internationale, De la méfiance à l'amitié'.

<sup>34</sup> Guieu, 'Les juristes au regard de l'historien: le cas de l'engagement des professeurs de droit pour l'union de l'Europe dans l'entre-deux-guerres', 11 *Bulletin de l'Institut Pierre Renouvin* (2001), available at : <http://ipr.univ-paris1.fr/spip.php?article118>, at 8–10. See also Y. Muet, *Le débat européen dans l'entre-deux-guerres* (1997).

became the movement's house journal. 'L'Union Européenne est une nécessité', stated Politis in 1931. 'Elle est nécessaire aux États d'Europe non seulement pour sortir de la crise dont ils souffrent, mais pour se garantir mutuellement la paix'<sup>35</sup>. . . quand nous aurons aperçu les avantages de l'unité, nous pourrions essayer de transporter notre action dans les domaines économiques plus difficiles, plus graves, tels l'établissement des étrangers, l'immigration, la rationalisation des productions, les tarifs douaniers et tant d'autres encore.'<sup>36</sup> In 1932, Politis participated in the European Union study commission that was created within the League of Nations, though it was to be abruptly abandoned upon the death of Briand and the silent opposition encouraged by the theorists of universalism. Until the start of World War II, the federative idea was mainly discussed in connection with the system of security. It was the failure of the Disarmament Conference, and above all the Italo-Ethiopian War, that once again launched the European debate. 'L'Europe est plus que jamais devant le tragique dilemme, s'unir ou périr', wrote Politis in 1936.<sup>37</sup> The profound reflections of the last years of his life, in which Politis anticipated the reorganization of Europe on new moral bases, were brought together by his son in a book published in 1946, entitled *L'Avenir de l'Europe*.<sup>38</sup>

#### 4 Conclusion

We have here very briefly presented the intellectual profile of Nicolas Politis by sketching the main lines of his thought's evolution and his socio-political engagement over the course of his life. The profile of the government intellectual in terms of which I have proposed to study his career is closely tied to the scholar's discourse concerning politics. It allows one to observe the emergence of a space of intellectual production and of institutional positions that had become relatively autonomous *vis-à-vis* specifically national considerations but always remained in the service of their interests, which were in liberal thought conceived as consistent with the interests of international society. Politis simultaneously drew on all areas of his acknowledged competence: that of the French academic, the diplomat and politician in the service of his country, and the international arbiter. In doing so, he intervened at three levels of action, that of France, Greece, and new international institutions in The Hague, Paris, and Geneva. The richness of his career allows one to consider the intellectual engagement of jurists in new terms by closely associating the strategies of individual actors with the various contexts that they had themselves contributed towards creating.

<sup>35</sup> Politis, 'La Souveraineté des États et l'Union européenne' [1931] *Revue Bleue* 458.

<sup>36</sup> APNP, 220/65, Politis, 'Le projet de l'Union Européenne et la Société des Nations', extract from 3 *Revue de Droit International et des Sciences Diplomatiques et Politiques* (1930).

<sup>37</sup> Politis, 'La solidarité européenne', *Esprit international* (1936) 155.

<sup>38</sup> J. Politis, *L'avenir de l'Europe* (1946), at 129–131.