

# SLØK LECTURE

2 OCTOBER 2015

2 PM – 4 PM, BUILDING 1441, AUDITORIUM 3

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## REINVENTING THE IDEA OF EUROPE: 1815-1939

Today we think of nationalism, as largely tribal, chauvinistic and reactionary. But the nationalism which emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century – the nationalism of John Stuart Mill, Benjamin Constant, Alexis de Tocqueville, Jeremy Bentham, Giuseppe Mazzini among others – was dedicated to the idea of a community of nations, each politically independent but sharing a common cultural and legal heritage, which could be broadly identified as constitutive of Europe. It was this, for instance, rather than a federal union, which Mazzini meant by calling for a future, “United States of Europe”. In this lecture, I will describe how this new conception of Europe, although it owed much to earlier Enlightenment ideas about a European “republic”, attempted to incorporate the new perception of the “nation” as a quasi-organic body and as a representative democratically-constituted community, into a broader cultural whole.

*Following the Sløk Lecture, the section of Philosophy and History of Ideas will host a short reception.*