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The Europe the new deal made: current tensions in historical perspective

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Boston University
Tensions with Europe because of historical tie, professor says

Europe and the United States' similar liberal traditions are the cause of current tensions between the two world powers, Columbia University professor Ira Katznelson said last night in the School of Management.

The institute for Human Sciences sponsored the lecture, entitled "Europe and the New Deal Made: Current Tensions in Historical Perspective." Boston College professor Alan Wolfe and Boston University professor John Stone, chairman of BU's sociology department, also spoke at the event.

Katznelson said the biggest similarity between the politics of each of the two powers is their traditions of liberalism. He said liberalism is a definite bond between the two powers, but that very tie is also the current basis for current tensions, which have boiled especially hot as the United States has dialed up the rhetoric about Iraq.

Katznelson said he believes that though the United States and Europe are both liberal, the two have definitions of liberalism which vary on certain grounds, including citizenship rules, rules of diplomacy, rules for regulating the economy and rules for state and citizen relationship.

Though Europe's version of liberalism is currently in conflict with that of the United States, Katznelson said the European definition is derived from the earlier United States definition of liberalism, as defined in the "New Deal."

"Europe is uniformly liberal with a spectrum of possibilities.

— Ira Katznelson
professor, Columbia University

Europe tends to side more with the Reagan administration's form of liberalism and Western Europe tends to fall under the liberal definition posed by the "New Deal."

The countries with this "New Deal" definition are the ones that are mainly opposed to current United States ideas.

Some students in attendance said they expected the event to be more concerned with specific current affairs, such as recent United Nations debates over the war with Iraq.