

Thursday, November 23, 2006

History vs Public Policy

The Economist observes that, being caught in complex cross-tensions, it would help if the three countries of the South Caucasus cooperated on some minimally shared interests.

'But they are all, as Raffi Hovannisian, a former Armenian foreign minister, says of his country, "long on civilisation, short on statecraft."

(The Economist, November 18-24, 2006, The art of levitation: how Armenia copes with its isolation in the combustible Caucasus.)

Maybe a worthwhile topic for a reflective paper (something like a Master's Thesis): analyze South Caucasus handling of history through Nietzsche's essay on "Uses and Abuses of History". This is, in case anyone has not read it, some of Nietzsche's best writing, with none of the tiring hyperbole of much of his other work.

Arguably the region is a perfect illustration of that essay -- how a place can have, simultaneously, too much and too little history: many unfortunate experiences, worse interpretations, and, as of yet, no successful tradition to build on, from which to establish publicly shared practices.