**Think Centrist – More Food For Thought**

<https://www.altaycoskun.com/more-food-for-thought>

**#2 Two Alternative Reasons for Engaging in Politics Presented in Seneca’s *On Leasure* (3.2-3)**

Free translation by Altay Coskun (8 January 2022)

Two schools in particular disagree about this matter, the Epicureans and the Stoics, but both direct their students to leisure on different ways. Epicurus says: “The Wise does not engage in politics, unless something inconvenient happens.” Zenon says: “He engages in politics, unless something prevents him from doing so.”

The one seeks leisure out of principle, the other due to an inconvenient necessity. The former reason (for devoting oneself to leisure) is very clear: if the Republic is corrupt to a level that it is beyond healing, if it is in the grip of evils, then the Wise will not make a stand in vain and waste his efforts without being of any use. (And) if he has only little authority or influence; if the political establishment is not willing to let him join; if health hinders him, he will not embark on a way that he knows he cannot manage, just as he would not set sail on ship shaken (by storm) or enlist his name for military service unless at good health.

Seneca, *De Otio* 3.2-3 (Rome, 1st century CE)

Duae maxime et in hac re dissident sectae, Epicureorum et Stoicorum, sed utraque ad otium diuersa uia mittit. Epicurus ait: 'non accedet ad rem publicam sapiens, nisi si quid interuenerit'; Zenon ait: 'accedet ad rem publicam, nisi si quid inpedierit.'

Alter otium ex proposito petit, alter ex causa; causa autem illa late patet. Si res publica corruptior est quam <ut> adiuuari possit, si occupata est malis, non nitetur sapiens in superuacuum nec se nihil profuturus inpendet. Si parum habebit auctoritatis aut uirium nec illum erit admissura res publica, si ualetudo illum inpediet, quomodo nauem quassam non deduceret in mare, quomodo nomen in militiam non daret debilis, sic ad iter quod inhabile sciet non accedet.