

Panem et Circenses

In Latin the phrase Panem et Circenses is best translated as Bread and Circuses. The metaphor was first used by Juvenal, the Roman satirist who wrote circa 100 A D. This phrase describes a populace that no longer values the civic virtues and the public life. It denotes a population whose main goal in life is the mere satisfaction of immediate, shallow requirements. Panem et circenses is all about triviality and frivolity of the crudest, vulgar lowest common denominator.

“Already long ago, from when we sold our vote to no man, the People have abdicated our duties, for the People who once upon a time handed out military command, high civil office, legions – everything, now restrains itself and anxiously hopes for just two things, bread and circuses.” Juvenal, Satire 10:77-81

The Romans sold their souls for free bread and the gladiatorial games in the Coliseum. In America we have our free bread otherwise known as entitlements. Generations have lived on the dole better known as Food Stamps. This program which was designed as a temporary hand up has become a multi-generational palliative. But we also have our circuses. Think about the cheap, disgusting fare that Hollywood cranks out with disturbing regularity. The near worship of sports figures who have a moronic intelligence level. And who, by the way, are terrible role models for our youth. And then there is that great intellect Madonna who is an authority on every issue.

The bread and circuses are devouring an ever-increasing share of our national budget. There is the illusion of getting free stuff. We are drowning in debt and soon will have to make hard, difficult decisions. We have passed the point where there will be easy choices to get us out of this mess.

But there is an even greater danger of bread and circuses. And

that is the obfuscation of the gathering storm. Entitlements lull us to sleep. Entitlements obscure the barbarians at the gate. We are given the illusion of unending safety. The barbarians at the gate are militant Muslims. Just like Rome we are working around the clock to destroy ourselves. The Muslim barbarians will simply stroll into our shattered shell of a nation and pick up the fragments easily.

We are poised on the brink of World War III. The fuse is already burning and the powder keg will soon explode. Israel is running out of time and must soon strike Iran. When we are fighting for our national life we will look back and realize how stupid we were demanding our bread and circuses.