

Words Poorly Used #52 — Minarchism

There are actually at least two kinds of minarchist. The first is the libertarian who sees a small but appropriate role for a little bit of a state. Some people see this as approving of acorns but disliking oaks. I suppose this is through a confusion among the words stasis, meaning an unchanging condition, and state, in the physicists' sense of a momentarily unchanging condition, and the state, the politicians' version of metastasis. Metastasis, in its Greek expression, means exactly the opposite of stasis –it means “to change,” which is what the state does to grow, and to strive toward its true objective, and to take control. This type of minarchist engages in *non sequitur* as a way of life. But then there is the second kind of minarchist, the more practical one, who sees libertarianism as a continuing resistance **against** the state. Grover Norquist may be an infamous example. He said, “I don’t want to abolish government. I simply want to reduce it to the size where I can drag it into the bathroom and drown it in the bathtub.” But Norquist immediately demonstrated that he was a hypocrite by backing the Bush 43 administration. In fact, his organization was about tax reform, never a true sign of either minarchism or libertarianism (never an argument about what we are, but haggling over the price and who will pay). To me a far more constructive form of minarchism would be that of either Chris Edwards, who suggested that the U.S. government just stop doing things not enumerated in its constitution, or Harry Browne, who recommended that we could just start by cutting everything in half.

Kilgore