

Extinction of the Lions

a fable about the ultimate end of socialism

by Kenneth A. Kuhn

Jan. 11, 2013

Copyright © 2013 by Kenneth A. Kuhn. This work may be freely distributed provided it is not altered in anyway and authorship credit is given to me. Any similarity of this fable to human life is intentional.

There was once a group of lions who lived an easy life in human captivity. Humans provided good food and a safe albeit confined place to live. Life was good although boredom did set in from time to time. The lions observed much about the humans. They observed that some humans worked and provided for other non-working humans who were either too young, too sick or injured, or too old to work. Humans who would otherwise be left behind were thriving. This was counter to the ways of lions in the wild but it seemed to work well. Life was good for all humans. And certainly the captive lions were beneficiaries. They concluded that humans had a superior system.

One evening the humans forgot to latch the gate. The lions escaped and went back to the jungle and met up with members of their pride from years earlier. They told their pride members of human concepts concerning government and how governments could make life better for all. They convinced the pride to put them in charge of a government so that the lives of lions in the wild could be improved. And so it was.

One of the first concerns of the new government was the welfare of new lion cubs. It was noted that a number of cubs were sickly, did not get enough to eat, and either died or were killed by hyenas. The solution was to put a tax on healthy adult lions so that these cubs could be provided for. The tax was extra prey they would have to bring in from hunts. And so conditions improved for the cubs. Sickly cubs that would otherwise have died now lived to become adults although a number remained sickly in adulthood and needed perpetual care.

It was also noted that parents of lion cubs pushed them into hunts early in their lives thus denying the cubs the pleasures of play. After all, life is about enjoyment, not work. So a law was passed to delay training until the cubs were nearly fully grown. Rather than being taught the skills of hunting by their parents, some of whom did not have the best skills, a government school would be set up to insure that all young lions received equal training so no lion cub would be left behind. Lions doing the full-time training would not be able to hunt, so to provide for them a new tax was placed on the hunting lions so they would have to bring back more food. Some lions complained about the taxes but the fact was that life on average was improving for lions. The government said so and presented the statistics to prove it. So it must be true.

Not all young lions learned how to hunt. That took effort and the government provided food for all anyway. Non-hunting lions would not be as wealthy as hunting lions but life was still good. Some lions had disabilities and could not hunt. These lions would need food so the government raised taxes on hunting lions. And so the government provided for all lions. The hunting lions were expected to share their good fortune of being the fittest and wealthiest with the rest of the pride. Life was good. Some lions that had only marginal skills at hunting realized that they could fake disability and receive free food and enjoy a decent life without the burden of the hunt. Yes, government was good and they fully supported it. In elections the ruling party was always

Extinction of the Lions

a fable about the ultimate end of socialism

re-elected on the theme of government providing for all. The hunting lions voted against that concept but they were becoming an ever smaller minority.

The government noted that as lions aged past a certain point that they were much less effective in hunts and would end up wasting away until they died or were killed by hyenas. To solve this problem the government instituted yet another tax on the hunting lions to bring in even more food so the government could provide for the elderly lions. That was an improvement but these elderly lions needed additional care so the government hired some lions to provide full-time care and services for the elderly. Of course, that would mean higher taxes on the remaining hunting lions. They were told not to worry because someday they would be the beneficiaries. They were simply paying a debt that they owed to the society of lions. They were reminded that it was the government that took care of them from the time they were cubs and it was the government that taught them how to hunt and it was the government that took care of them when they were sick, injured, or elderly. The government needed taxes to provide all of the benefits. Contrary to what the hunting lions thought, the chief ruling lion told them that they did not make a life for themselves. Without government they were all nothing. Looking back it was a wonder that lions survived at all without a government.

The non-hunting lions began having compassion for the prey of the hunting lions. They thought it was unfair that some creatures were robbed of the opportunity to enjoy life so that hunting lions could become wealthy. They pushed the government to pass laws restricting what prey the hunting lions could kill. Any prey that was young, sick or injured, or elderly was off limits to the hunt. Other laws were passed in the name of fairness that only prey capable of a strong defense could be hunted. New government agencies were created to enforce these laws thus creating new jobs for lions to perform instead of hunting. Taxes on hunting lions were increased to pay for this. The hunting lions complained that these new laws were making it impossible to hunt but no one listened. The hunting lions warned that the system was nearing collapse but no one listened as life was so good. What could possibly be wrong? It was well understood that any issue could be simply solved by raising taxes on the hunting lions. Why would that concept ever fail? It must be that the hunting lions were greedy and unwilling to pay their share of taxes.

With the lions hunting only the most robust, the populations of sick, injured, and elderly of prey animals increased and created major problems for those species. Problems spread throughout the jungle. The government of lions called for studies to be done to figure out what the problem was. Those studies only concluded that more government spending was needed for more study.

With an ever increasing number of non-hunting lions to take care of and an ever increasing number of lions that could have hunted but were now employed by the government to provide social services, the taxes on the hunting lions kept rising and rising. The hunting lions were increasingly feeling that their lives were miserable despite the government's frequent proclamation that on average all lions were living much better lives than before.

Gradually, more of the hunting lions realized that hunting was too much work and living on subsidies was much easier so they dropped out of hunting. The government's response was to increase taxes on the remaining hunting lions again and again to pay for the extensive social

Extinction of the Lions

a fable about the ultimate end of socialism

services the pride needed and deserved. All the government asked was that the fortunate hunting lions pay their fair share in taxes. The vast majority of the pride agreed. And so it was.

Finally, the toll of taxes became too great and the few remaining hunting lions all quit as they realized that they were working themselves to death for the benefit of all other lions but yet the government was receiving all the credit. To make up for the shortfall in tax revenue (food in the case of lions) the government raised taxes more. But no revenue came in as why would any lion hunt when government benefits were so much easier? The situation quickly became an emergency. Without food many lions both young and old were starving. The social worker lions had not hunted in such a long time that they no longer had any hunting skills. The majority of lions were dependent on the hunting lions paying taxes so the government could give them food. There were massive protests to the government as to why it was not providing like it had in the past. The government was powerless and the pride began quickly dying off from starvation and attacks from hyenas. Meanwhile the vultures were enjoying a feast. The pride became extinct except for the small remaining group of hunter lions that had quit and abandoned the pride to start over somewhere else. Having the skills to hunt and not being dependent on government they knew they could build a new pride without a government.

And so they did. The new pride was based on the proven concept of working to live. Young cubs would be encouraged by their parents to learn hunting skills as early in life as possible. Parents provided food and encouragement to their cubs rather than paying a tax so the government could do that for them. Some sickly cubs would sadly die. Other lions involved in the hunt might become injured and sadly die. Charity was extended as it always had been to the extent practical to sickly, injured, and elderly lions. They would share in the kills although their portion would be less. There was only so much food to go around and if not properly fed the hunting lions would be unable to hunt and all lions would die. The lions lived under the laws of Nature which ultimately knows best even if its methods in the short term seem harsh.

The hunting lions from the former pride taught the young cubs to be very wary of any government set up to make life better for all. Good intentions driven by feelings and not tempered by wisdom can lead to horrible consequences for all. This new pride of lions grew and prospered. It was realized that the lessons of the past should not be forgotten and would be taught to each new generation of cubs in hopes that they would never repeat the mistakes of the past. The problem of government providing all services is that many lions would naturally become dependent on government and be unable to hunt for themselves. That is against the laws of Nature. Nature's laws exist for good reason. The consequences of breaking Nature's laws are severe as had been experienced. Nature knows that it works much better if every lion strives to make it for themselves. That does not mean no charity, nurturing, or even social investment. It only means no dependency for dependency is a weakness that is against Nature's concepts.

Years later the humans who had taught the original captive lions about the virtues of socialism experienced the same social implosion. Just as in the case of the lions, the provider humans abandoned the collapsing system to start over without the good intentions of socialism. The lions and all other creatures knew this. Humans were the last species to figure it out.

~ The End ~