The New World Act

by M. Barns

The Social Welfare Act of 2027 was passed, with much controversy, after the National Meeting of Scholars & Elders in 2024. It was said that in order to decrease population— and thus poverty, crime and the growing uneducated workforce in New World— they needed to limit, if not abolish, the Social Reform Act of 2013 that provided government assistance and aid to families and individuals in need. Many said that without the Social Reform Act, New World would have rioted, causing New World War II, but others believe that in offering poor citizens assistance, the government is encouraging them to stay within their class.

The Scholars and Elders agreed that offering assistance to individuals and families solely based on their social and economic standing without consideration of merit or their potential contribution to society was unacceptable. It was then decided that the funding that once went to underprivileged families would go to recent graduates to help them in the years between their graduation and government job placement. Since the Social Reform Act stated that all graduates would be appointed jobs based on their school standing it generally took two years to attain a job after graduation, and since every job was appointed by the government either after high school or college graduation there were no jobs for recent graduates to take in the meantime.

The Elders and Scholars believed this system to be the best. It would encourage lower income families to apply for the FEA test so that they could receive funding to go to college, instead of continuing to live off of government assistance. It would also allow college graduates time to visit with their families, since the FEA act restricts any contact with non-scholars or non-students during their studies, and since most of them would be required to relocate to another region of New World for their job appointments.

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But the Social Welfare Act was not originally met with as much disagreement as the Scholars and Elders originally thought. Many of the members of the lower class were not offered the luxuries of public communication devises, so they were forced to take to the streets in protest. Although the Elders and the Scholars were aware of the protesting none of it affected them and they continued to go about their everyday lives. Eventually the protestors began to camp outside of the Debanner building where the National Meeting of Scholars & Elders was held every year, but they were unaware that 364 days out of the year the building lay empty.

Protestors began pitching camps in Freedom Park, which was three blocks from Debanner. Since no one was occupying the building during that time the Elders and Scholars decided to let the poor continue to live there. What they didn't expect was for the population of the park to double in the first month, and gain support from the students who were waiting on their job appointments. Although the Social Welfare Act benefited them, many of them came from privileged families and didn't need the assistance, and preferred to support the actions of the poor.

The Scholars and Elders found this unacceptable, and decided to create a ban on communication between social classes, this is when the Social Class Act of 2027 was formed, banning anyone who was in a College Plus Job Placement Program to socialize with someone in the High School Job Program. Although this proved difficult for the Elders and Scholars to develop they determined that mediators would now be appointed from the recent college graduate pool, so that negotiations for work and things of that nature would be taken care of by trained individuals in the College Plus Program. In doing this they ensured that there would be no more communication between the classes unless it was work-related. The Scholars and Elders thought this was a brilliant idea, and congratulated themselves over a bottle of very old brandy.

However, the Scholars & Elders didn't plan for the members of the High School Job Program to protest, and request that they receive equal rights. Since the High School Job Program only accounted for 33% of the jobs in New World, the Scholars & Elders decided that it would be in their best interest to get rid of all of the members of the High School Job Program, and replace their simple jobs with machines. Everyone thought this was a brilliant idea, and envisioned what they would do with their bonuses for saving the rest of New World so much money by switching to machines.

The oldest scholar proposed that the members of the High School Job Program be brought to the ravine, and pushed over. After some discussion the Scholars & Elders thought that would be too much trouble. A younger scholar suggested poisoning the food that they received each week from the New World Public Assistance Program. Everyone thought that was a grand idea, until someone mentioned that stray animals could get ahold of the food, and no one wanted to harm the animals.

When the grandson of the eldest elder stood up to make a motion no one paid attention until he cleared his throat more than three times, and even then his grandfather had to knock his cane against the table. The boy, although not a boy, a man in his mid-thirties, proposed that they simply trick all of the members of the High School Job placement department into coming to a meeting in Freedom Park. He said to offer free food, and say that the Elders & Scholars wish to meet with them to discuss how they can develop equal rights for everyone in New World. He proposed that they then surround the park with the laser fences made popular during the 2017 riots, which could stay in place without having to be tampered with for a minimum of five years.

The Elders and Scholars were skeptical of the boys idea, questioned him relentlessly. *What will we do with the members of the High*

School Job placement group who do not go to the meeting. Well, we let them live outside of the park, of course, they can become the new managers of the robotics departments and honorary members of the College Jobs Program. They have obviously shown that they support the government over their people and can be trusted. *What will we do with the people in the park?* Allow them to fend for themselves. We will put barriers up so no one can see their world. If any live past the five year mark we can discuss what to do with them then, but I doubt they will. *Will we have to continue to give them food?* No, I propose we give them a one-time offer of seeds and small plows and scrap wood. If they are able to survive off of that we can meet in five years to determine if they are able to re-enter New World.

Everyone seemed happy with this plan. It was decided that most of New World would be excited to keep the 15% of their earnings that was taken out to be given to the members of the High School Job Placement Program to help feed and clothe their families. They would simply make a press release stating that they were challenging members of the High School Job Program to pass a series or rigorous alternative tests to see if they could become productive members of the College Job Program. By the five year mark the Elders & Scholars expected the members of New World to completely forget about the High School Job Program, as well as the lost members who used to work for it.

That night the scholars created a five-language press release to be sent to every member of New World, while the Elders worked together to film a broadcast of their ideas to send to the members of New World, who had a tendency to throw away the pamphlets that were sent out. The youngest scholar— which was now what they called the Eldest Scholars grandson— was in charge of creating pamphlets and videos to send out to the members of the High School Job Program so that they would all be at Freedom Park by 10pm, which is when they scheduled the speech that would be given by The

Counsel of Scholars & Elders. They were also told that free food, not the government sanctioned food that they were used to receiving would be served starting at 7pm.

The youngest scholar knew that all of the political activist and their children would be there to hear the speech from The Counsel of Scholars & Elders, but that many more, if not most, of the High School Job Program members would show up for a hot meal of fresh meat and vegetables, so he sent that digital memo out twice, and printed double the amount of flyers. By nightfall Freedom Park was packed with full and almost happy members of the High School Job Program. But before any of them could leave the youngest scholar ordered the city watch to activate the laser fence they had laid around the premises of Freedom Park earlier that day.

Over the screams of pain and frustration that were falling from the mouths of the members of the High School Job Program, the Council of Elders & Scholars congratulated themselves, and decided that the next few weeks should be spend designing a devise that would both drown out the screams of the forgotten people, as well as hide them from the rest of the world. It only took three weeks for one of the middle-aged scholars, who was only seventy-seven at the time, to develop a machine that would produce a mirage around the boarder of the city. The Elders & Scholars decided to turn the mirage into a mural of the hard-working College Job members. In another four weeks one of the Elders remembered a devise that was created to mimic the sounds of the ocean in 2018, but had failed— it simply absorbed the sounds it was attempting to mimic. With this devise and the mosaic in place the Elders & Scholars were sure that the members of New World would soon forget about the forgotten members of the High School Job Program.

However the Elders & Scholars were wrong about one thing. Although the members of the College Job Program dismissed the forgotten members of the High School Job Program, they

remembered that in depleting their Program they saved 15% of their earnings. This caused the College Job members to begin to protest, this time in Anonymity Park. They were sure that there must be other jobs that could be cut, so that they could make more money. The College Job members decided that they should get rid of the Council of Elders & Scholars, so that the money they made could be returned to the College Job members.

The Elders & Scholars thought this was a ridiculous idea, who would come up with the laws and the rules if they were no longer in place. The College Job members argued that machines could be used to make their decisions, and that the committee actually only needed one member to keep the machines working—they chose the youngest of the scholars, simply for his age. The College Job members decided that the best way to take care of the problem with the members of the Council of Scholars & Elders was to open the gates to the Forgotten Park— formerly known as Freedom Park— and place them inside. No one cared that there would be decaying bodies and multiple gangs who had formed over the past few months, they only wanted the Committee of Elders & Fs out of sight so they could each collect 7.3% more of their earnings.

They were then forgotten, until The College Job members split into two groups: The Original College Job members and the College Job Elitists (who required three years of study past college to be considered). The College Job Elitist decided that they could do without the Original College Job members, and that most of their jobs could be done by machines, plus they wanted to save the 3.4% of their wages that they were losing by employing the original College Job members.

The youngest scholar, who was now the only scholar tried to inform them that New World would soon be populated by more machines than people, but the College Job Elitist didn't care. They simply

ignored the only scholars' warnings and continued to march people into the forgotten park.