



THE TRUE REVOLUTION

andrew white

T H E T R U E R E V O L U T I O N

a j o u r n e y i n E a s t e r n E u r o p e

t e x t & p h o t o g r a p h s b y a n d r e w w h i t e

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*For John & Ruth
Martin K.
& Lily*

For giving yourselves

and a child shall lead them.

The photographs and text on the following pages are drawn from real experiences. Dec. 2014 – Dec. 2015



*My journey begins with a face
It is a child's face.
I do not know his name or anything about his life
he sits alone for a while, in his own world.*

*Occasionally he gets up and walks slowly and quietly close to me.
How long he has been here or what brought him to this particular place,
I do not know.*

*But I know that within these walls. . . .
I have witnessed a revolution.*



*the hand I hold
the smile freely given
the heart once moved is prayer unspoken*

*the child their eyes
the embrace their hope*

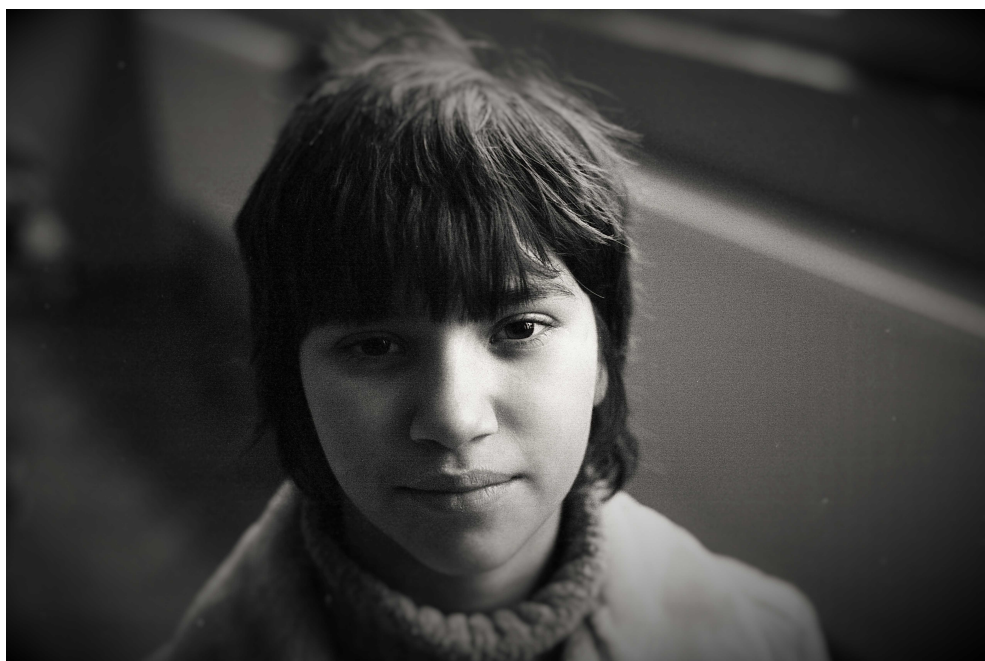
till I leave

*and turning
grieve*

*time and place change
but still their eyes call us*

*drawn by their sound
till every child loved*

and family found





*Some know this moment
the first child who draws from within us the precious gift of compassion.
Though not always able to change their course of life, the experience remains
changing our perception.*

*This awakening brings hope,
hope to make a difference, at least to one child.
possibly many.*

Chavdar

Yordana

Emiliya

Kalin

















December 15th 2015

someone

somewhere



*We're taken to a young woman, living in a derelict house
She has a few scraps of chipboard left for the fire.*

*Her room is cold and depressingly sparse.
She moves within the discarded skeleton of some previous occupant,
existing in a psychological wasteland somewhere between the real world
and the mentally unstable condition which has developed.*

*She fails to fall into any neat category of civilized society.
Caught between two worlds, each day she fades from view
to become merely one of the many ghosts which misfortune, handicap,
or just someone else's unkindness has made.*



. a young woman's tragic need

one child's act of compassion.



*.the child's gift of the five pound note
2000 miles later, this inanimate piece of paper keeps a single lady warm for a week*

*the wood is delivered
a neighbour notices
he offers help to split the logs for her fire*

*a little suddenly goes a long way
and a child's small act of kindness has begun a cycle*

attracting a chain of revolutionary events







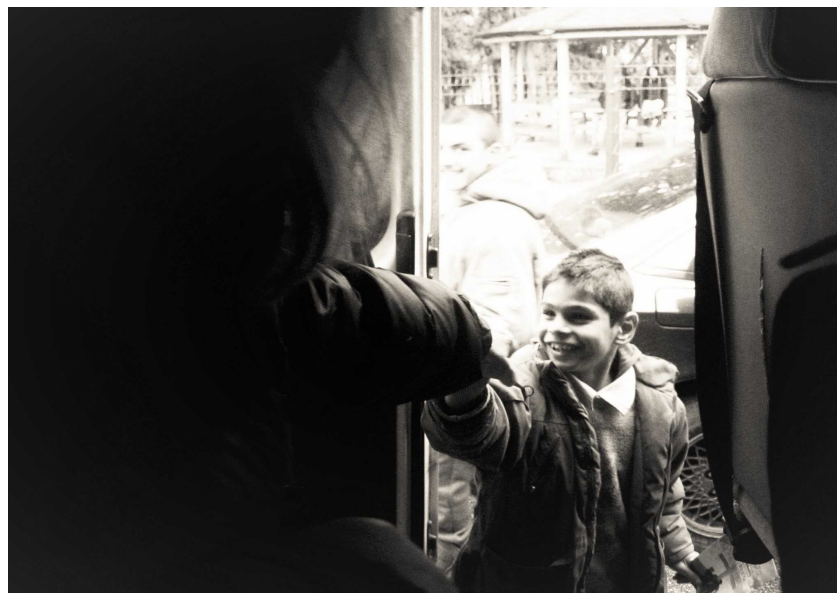
How many give
only to receive?



others simply give



and keep giving



*I've become fascinated by the people who give.
seeking nothing in return;*

*people who don't have much, yet always seem able to share something
their time, their homes, their lives;*

*each, a silent act of sacrifice,
often without recognition or thanks.*

*This peculiar principle of giving brings me to a precipice of thought;
if these people are able to give so much out of what they don't have,
can I keep walking past?*

March 17th 2015

Lily's Story



We remove our shoes, careful not to mark the floor; it is morning,
and we are in Eastern Europe sipping cinnamon tea in the sumptuous home
of a prominent Christian Evangelist. Our host is gracious; his home, tastefully luxurious.
I can't help thinking how I would love such a place if I could pre-order my heavenly abode!

After our meeting, our restful time seated out on the veranda draws to close.
The morning sunlight picks out Spring blossom and the distant snowy mountains.
It is a quiet neighbourhood sensibly located away from the noise and tumult of the city.

We leave for our next appointment, the other side of town.



The sun is still shining as we approach the refuse fields which separate
the gypsy camp from the city. Instead of seeing blossom trees
I observe a man with an old trolley, picking his way through the sea of rubbish
scattered either side of us; hopeful to discover something useful
with which to improve his existence.

Between sky and city lies the Balkan Mountains, between the city and my feet
lies the scavenged carcass of a mule - there could be no greater contrast
to the affluent suburb we had been so enjoying half an hour ago,
where in socks we had stood on polished floors.





Some of the people who inhabit this district share a very different routine to that of the city dwellers. If you look long enough you start to notice their quiet pattern about the city. With small carts or mule fueled buggies they trace their way around the bins and refuse sites of town.

A man inspects a plastic car wheel from a discarded ride-on child's toy, useful for something; he places it in his cart and pushes it on toward his next refuse trove.



My appointment is with a young man from the gypsy neighbourhood.

He is my interpreter and guide. The mud, the shacks, the poverty,
are in peculiar contrast to the people I meet.

My interpreter makes the connections
as we walk through the neighbourhood.

Our hosts are gracious and kind. The children in particular are curious
but ready with their smiles, despite the surrounding refuse and deprivation.

Humanity's heart shines through the poverty somehow.

I witness dignity, self respect, loyalty and friendship.

When our time there draws to a close,
I carry far more away with me than the dust on my boots.

I am reminded that God created Adam from such.

In the evening we are again sitting in the luxury home
of a prosperous Christian business man. Food and drinks are plentiful.
We have an evening of singing, prayer and testimonies;
sharing how good God is. The temperature outside is dropping,
but we are warm and comfortable within.

The meeting over, it is now late,
our interpreter tells us we have one more appointment
with a widow he knows. It is approaching midnight
and I am concerned for keeping an elderly lady up so late,
but he assures me that she is expecting our arrival.



Coke is poured into plastic cups for us.
We can tell that our hostess feels greatly honoured by our visit
as we enter the tiny room.
My senses are suddenly assailed.
I instinctively recoil at the environment. I retreat inwardly,
trying to understand how and why the conditions of poverty which surround me
could be home to a fellow human being.
I look at my friend who is with me; no words pass,
but we are both shaken.

The diminutive lady before us has been widowed for more than 40 years.
Sometimes she has no wood for fuel in winter.
She sells trinkets on the street to help make ends meet,
yet refuses payment for cleaning her local church each week.

She turns and says something in Bulgarian, raising her arms;
she is evidently radiantly happy.
Our interpreter conveys the meaning:

“When I woke up this morning, the first thing I did was praise God and I said to Him;
I am the richest woman in the world!”

I find it hard to hold back the emotion I feel, beholding the strange contradiction before my eyes.
She had discovered a secret which we so often strive for with increasing desperation;
'If we could only have enough money, our worries would be eased and we'd find peace'.

But she had discovered something deeper than peace through possessions.
Somehow, despite material want, this elderly lady had found genuine happiness, through spiritual devotion.

Blinking back tears I reach for whatever cash I have in my pocket and throw it
onto the small table in front of me. She has never seen so much money.
I ask the interpreter to say that Jesus wants to bless her.
I realise on reflection. that Jesus already has.

The blessing was hers to give to me.
This was *my* opportunity, *my* lesson for recognising the true meaning of prosperity;
the divine quality Jesus came to seek
within His Church.



**My world fits around my needs
my wants, my desires, my dreams**

*their world threatens their own survival
born with nothing, they die with nothing*



**my world applauds and celebrates self;
the preservation and rights of the great 'I'**

their world has no rights

only the wrongs which poverty

and lack of opportunity births



could our world be different ?

my imagined security

their endured suffering

giving my self

they become themselves

when

I can share,

we both

repair,

then life's true destiny reveals;

that

by

my

own

hands,

their

sorrow

heals





Christmas 2014

the givers





*This book was inspired by the Governor and Carers of a special needs orphanage in Eastern Europe,
who have devoted their lives to the welfare of these wonderful children.*

*It opened my eyes to the sacrifice made by those often unnoticed by the world;
hidden acts of unconditional kindness.*

*These are the true heroes making history, making it possible for someone else to hope
beyond the impossibility of their own circumstances.*





*Each time we give unconditionally to another person
we proclaim true revolution.*

*We dare to turn our homogenised, standardised culture of self-protective-ism
into purpose and possibility for someone else.*



And yet so often. . . .

*the sacred communion sought by the flat screen of our iPad
draws a deeper devotion than the heart which beats next to us.*

*There's nothing sadder than witnessing the quiet death of heroism - humanity's selfless quality
as we stare into the flat, still reflection of our own image.*



What a difference we could make with our brief existence.

*Although giving to charity has its place, let's just put that to one side for a moment.
Regardless of the thing we call money, each and every one of us has the capacity
to offer something to someone in difficulty;*

*an extra pair of hands, encouragement, a listening ear,
as well as a chip butty when we see hunger.*

It's just being available.





*It's nothing new really;
it's just learning to recognise needs we've previously missed. . . .*

simply because our head was turned the other way.



*I think we should once and for all give up analysing whether or not we 'owe' charity to our fellow man;
what is owed is conditional ; but what is given*

. can truly set free.



Begin with something small.....

and watch what happens





Thank you so much.

Wayne & Adele, Mike & Ruth at 'Where there's a NEED'

Tommy, Samy, Polin, Ctezto & Illyan and the wonderful people you know.

Dad, for making both visual and geographical journey possible.

Robin, for pursuing the story of 'gratefulness'.

Rachel, Grace and Sammy, for being yourselves x

The photograph on the cover of this book

Painted on the outside of an orphanage building, this photo was taken in the winter of 2014.

Though worn by the elements, a human essence still remains; a tree or vine grows and from its sinuous branches hands of different size and age appear to be blossoming.

One easily imagines both child and carer participating in this very simple, very immediate creative statement of existence; graffiti at its most personal.

Though now somewhat tatty and neglected, these fragile hand prints become a symbol of our unique identity, growing from the one tree of man's shared existence. How far shall we let each identity fade?

Through the hands of a child, we're confronted with a poignant message. . . .
for our generation.



