

# Him or Me

That's how I came to be in the army in Brasov in December 1989 when the revolution happened. I was eighteen years old and found myself caught in a gun fight with one of the guns in my hand. This is what happened. We were handed live ammunition and our lieutenant, who was twenty-three, gathered us for a briefing.

'If ordered, you have to shoot,' we were told. 'It's better that his or her mother cries rather than your mother.'

He turned to me and said, 'Do you understand, Csiszer?' I heard myself say that I didn't think I could shoot innocent people.

'Right Csiszer,' barked the lieutenant, 'you stay right next to me all the time and I will personally watch you.'

My colleagues, who were eighteen-year-olds like me, all felt the same as I did. 'Lieutenant,' said one, 'I will have to stand right next to Csiszer because I feel the same.' And then other voices joined in, saying, 'Me too,' 'And me too,' and 'Me too.' It was really intense.

Thanks to God's goodness (though I didn't know that then) we were not ordered to go out against the demonstrators.

The following night, when the shooting really started in Brasov against the so-called terrorists, we were marched out into action. It was chaos. It was the kind of total chaos that took us over. It didn't cross my mind whether God existed or not when I fired my weapon. We wanted to shoot at the vehicles coming towards us. To be totally honest, I didn't feel bad. I just fired.

We were due to finish military service at the end of June but, because of all the changes that followed the revolution, the authorities decided not to complete our training and released us. After a six month break, it was time for my



first classes in Cluj. That summer, through the influence of my girlfriend, I went to a Christian camp. It was run by Americans and I went because I'd studied English but had never had an opportunity to use the language. I thought it would be good to try it out. I really liked the community feeling, the songs and the whole atmosphere of the camp, but I didn't become a Christian. Then when college started, I began to attend a students' Bible study group and that's where I met Levente again. He was in Cluj by then.