

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with King Michael I of Romania
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PREFACE

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KING MICHAEL I of ROMANIA

November 12, 2001

Beginning Tape One

Question: Your Majesty, I would like to thank you for agreeing to share with us your recollections of a very complicated period in your life, and critical period in Romanian history. Before we begin, for the camera, could you please tell us your name, when you were born and where you were born?

Answer: Now, this thing of the name is something which is very confusing to very many people. My name is Michael, as you know, but this -- I don't want to make too many explanations, but anyhow just tell you how things are. Of course, our family comes from Germany from Sigmaringen, become the first -- the first king of Romania was a Hohenzollern, like my grandfather. But that ended with my grandfather. So we, in fact, do not have a family name in Romania. The family name of Hohenzollern is the origin, but that does not figure in any document or [indecipherable]. So that's why I said it's a bit confusing. So, the result is that we are called by our name and then add, of Romania. So that's how things are now. I was born on the 25th of October, 1921, in Sinaia in a house which unfortunately doesn't exist any more because the o-original one burnt down, and it was rebuilt in 1954 - '56, the modern one. So that's about all for the introduction.

Q: Thank you, thank you. Your majesty, King Carol returned to Romania in 1930. You were nine years old. As I understand it, he took charge of your education and upbringing at that time. Can you talk with us about your relationship with your father in those years, and about the education that he organized for you?

A: Well, two things here. One was my personal feelings and personal relationship with him, and the second part was a j -- was about the schooling. My personal relationship with him, to put it quite frankly, was not all the very best. I don't know how many people in United States and other countries are quite aware of what went on at that period. I don't want to say too strongly, but his private life is the one that -- that other people know more about. As you know, probably, that he had a connection with a certain person. As far as I could recollect what I was told, that started when I was about two years old. And in the 20's he left Romania and renounced his rights to the family and to the throne and to everything concerning Romania. So then when he came back in 1930, with a promise that this person was not going to come back with him. He finally did bring it back. So this situation got, well let's say practically out of hand. Because of this, my mother had to leave the country. So she left for good in 1932. So he had been away in the 20's, and my mother looked after me and gave me -- this is the way we [indecipherable] in Romania, you know, the first seven years at home. And that's something that normally remains with one for the rest of your life. And the life after, when my father came was so totally different that it just was very, very difficult for me to really take it. Well, that's one part, but the part of my education where I must say I was thankful to him because he had an idea, which is certainly very well. He made a special school for me inside the palace grounds, but in the [indecipherable] and we started with 12 boys in this school, each one of them from another part of the country, and from completely different social standings. From sons of simple peasants right up to sons of some industrialists, or intellectuals. So that helped me to, say to rub shoulders with a very good part of the Romanian people, even if at our age. And the teachers that we had were selected of some of the best run schools, especially one school. And then at the end of every school year, for about three weeks, we took off in a train, a special train with everybody in it, the professors and all of

us, in a different part of the country, we -- well, we took our lessons and courses in geography and history on the actual place where these things ac -- happened. So that is how I got to know my country, as much as possible, every little corner. I mean not every, it's very difficult, but a lot. Well, that has served me all through my life.

Q: You have just described a difficult relationship with King Carol. As you grew up in those years, did he talk with you and share his views about the political developments in Romania that he was confronting?

A: I forgot again. I forgot to mention one thing, that although my mother was gone, [indecipherable] with something was rather painful for me because he only let me go to see her twice a year for three weeks in Florence, because she went to Florence. You know, she loved art so much, she f-found a villa there from 1932 and bought this place, and that's where I used to go and see her. And I can say that those six months in -- those few mon -- not few months, few weeks, I'm sorry, few weeks at the time, I could say that that really charged my batteries, because otherwise it would have been really, if I can use the expression, absolute hell, sometimes. Now as far his political life and that, again, I don't think many people understand the situation at the time. I was never, at least not from him ever told what was going on. We learned a certain amount of political systems in school, but that was very dry, not in practice. So in all these events that f-finally led up to 1940 when he had to leave, I knew about them, of course, as a side line. But I had to try and find out by myself from various people, but I never got anything from him, from my father. And that was a terrible handicap when he left, because I was suddenly -- found myself in a position without actually knowing all the details. I knew a lot of things that were going on, but not all the details on how everything worked. And that made life really difficult.

Q: How did you find out what was going on?

A: What?

Q: How did you find out what was happening?

A: Well, of course, I could see the newspapers and some other people -- and some of the boys used to tell me things that I always expected my father to say. So that's the -- that is a very sketchy thing and it's not the real basics of what was going on. That I didn't find out except much, much later.

Q: Can you describe your reaction if -- if you were aware of the significance of this, of the rise of Hitler to power in Germany?

A: Well, of course, that's -- everybody knew, I knew, we saw in the papers, we knew what was happening with him, yes. Well, I could put it then that in the later part of the 30's, all of Europe was catching fire, see, so we were unfortunately in a place geographically, in a very, very difficult situation from the east, then the pressures from the Germans. We had alliances before with [indecipherable] many people knew, which when Hitler started bullying Europe, these alliances fell to pieces, unfortunately. So our part of Europe was left uncovered. We had maybe an advantage as a disadvantage because we have oil, and Hitler needed oil. We have the Danube [indecipherable] part of the Danube. I think he liked that part also. So the whole political situation was getting more and more complicated, more and more involved. But I just found these things out in a [indecipherable] so to speak, not the actual basics, not the actual mechanism of it. That was my difficulty.

Q: Did you have the same difficulty knowing what -- what happened in Romanian political life at that time? There was a -- this was a period when right wing parties began to appear in Romania.

A: Yes. Of course [indecipherable] these people that used to come, wanting audiences to my father, but just very rarely other people, we had certain festivities. I knew a lot of them. I knew quite a lot of what they were and what they were doing, but that's about all. I had no actual proper contact with these people. They just sort of just -- you know, like a -- how shall I say, meet at a party, that sort of thing. But not in depth. Now that was very difficult.

Q: Some historians have said that some of those right wing political groups, the Iron Guard in particular --

A: Mm.

Q: -- had great appeal to young people in this country. Were you aware of -- of their mass appeal to young people here?

A: Well, among the young people, yes, I have caught, how do I -- shall I say, from their point [indecipherable] long, because through their parents, I suppose, and themselves, they realized what had happened with me and my mother. Now that did -- I must say it was very, very gratifying because whenever we met these young people [indecipherable] the warmth was extraordinary. Maybe I didn't quite understand why it was happening, what the reason for it was, but this I found out years later, because they realized what it was which was happening with my mother. And then you mentioned the point about the extreme right coming up, and that [indecipherable] influenced politically my father. Because I must say something here, which I don't want to be badly understood. But this person that was the cause of my mother's sadness, she was Jewish. Not that I have any particular feelings about that, but I have a feeling of what -- because of her, what happened with my mother. And those extreme rights were [indecipherable] the Nazi fifth column, you know, were anti-Jewish. That, of course, connected with my father, from his private life. Because during the 30's I must also admit that Romania progressed

enormously, if not politically, but economically. We have our money, the leu was practically at the level of the dollar in the end of the 30's. We had a standard of living like France and Belgium. So s -- some good did come, very much good. The trouble was the pol-political part that was not quite as it should have been. And this background of my father with these others is a complicated matter. And then of course, some political tendency, like in all parts of Europe, you know, we still have this -- how shall I put this, sort of a Byzantine influence, which is completely different to what we know in the west, politically speaking. That also didn't quite fit in with some of my father's ideas. And that's why, towards the end of the 30's, he formed a sort of a [indecipherable] we like to call it, which was not quite the thing to do, because when the real trouble started, we didn't have the old political parties to lean on. And then you got the situation that the extreme right started agitating out in the streets. Very complicated situation and he fell into that. Now, these are all things that I -- not studied, I'll say, but I found out many more details many years after. But at the time we were all very worried and I could not make out exactly what was going on in detail, because I wasn't told. I had to try and pick it up here and there. That's very much in a nutshell.

Q: What was your father's view about Jews in Romania? What were his feelings, his personal feelings and his political feelings?

A: About me personally?

Q: Abo -- about Jew -- Jewish people.

A: Oh. Well, he never talked about them. Not a word. That is also something pretty extraordinary because we knew what was going on with Hitler and so on, but he never said a word to me. So I can't really say what he actually felt about that. I'm sorry, that -- just one of those things I couldn't --

Q: An-and what did he think about the Iron Guard?

A: Well, that --

Q: Did he -- did he speak about that?

A: Well, the Iron Guard you mean?

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah, well that, of course, I could feel it more than hear it, to understand that he was, of course, not at all for that. He didn't want that at all. They were attacking him because of this person. And there were certain things that went on of course, which we also found out much later. Like the execution of these whole group of Iron Guard people. I still can't make out exactly if he approved this or if he instigated this, or it was done by some of the government people without him knowing [indecipherable] that I really cannot say, because I was not told. And even today I'm not very clear [indecipherable]

Q: That execution of the group of Iron Guard people, including Corneliu Codreanu himself, took place as your father was returning from a visit to Germany. This was actually a visit that you began --

A: Yes.

Q: -- with him --

A: Yes.

Q: -- in London. Could you talk about that trip --

A: Mm.

Q: -- to -- to, I believe Germany and France and the United Kingdom and what your goals were and what the results were.

A: Well, that again comes into the same complex with me, because I was there officially with him, of course, in London, Paris, and then we went to [indecipherable]. But what was going on underneath, the discussions he had around these places, I never knew a thing. It seems inconceivable, this thing, in a way, but unfortunate that that's how it was. I just know that the English visit -- you know, the English royal family, and many of the English people, did not appreciate my father at all because of his private life. So, the official part, of course, had to go along as it normally goes, but couldn't exactly feel hostility, but you felt something that was not quite the same as another place, you know. In France that was different and of course when we ended up in [indecipherable], of course I knew what Hitler was doing and I knew who he was and so on, but I was not involved. My father and him went up in the -- in the house there, and what happened, I don't know. What I heard that was being said, apparently, I c -- but I can't be sure, but Hitler must have said something about the extremists. In what way and how, I really can't tell. But whether what happened with Iron Guard execution was because of this, a-again, I'm sorry, I can't -- I really don't know.

Q: You met Adolf Hitler at -- on that occasion. Was that the first time you had met him and can you tell us your impressions of him and the people around him?

A: Well, of course I saw them all around there the first time I have ever been to this place. But [indecipherable]. That was a very -- just to show you, there was a awkward thing that happened that's [indecipherable] neither here nor there in this whole thing, because everybody knew my passion for cars and mechanics. So I happened to look out the window and I saw his big Mercedes there. So one of his aides, I think, was [indecipherable] so, are you interested in autos? I said well, yes. So they took me down and offered me to go in this car of his, ride it up to the

mountain at the little eagle's nest, what you call it, it was on top of the [indecipherable] and we went down, ju-just to show you I was out of all this thing that was going on in-inside.

Q: And your father did not reveal in his attitude or -- or mood, what was happening?

A: No [indecipherable]

Q: In this same trip, when you visited the United Kingdom -- I know because I've seen a photograph of a dinner at Guild Hall, where you were seated with Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain.

A: Yeah.

Q: Can you talk about him?

A: No, I think we just talked, you know, what one talks at a big party like that, but nothing else. And some of the newspapers had some funny jokes about that. They were wondering if I talked to him about fishing, because he was supposed to be a good fisherman, or something, but not -- you know --

Q: So at this time you were not aware of or talking about the Munich accords and the results of this for Romania.

A: No. Not at all, unfortunately.

Q: When did you become aware of the anti-Semitic nature of political groups like the Iron Guard, and the League of National Christian Defense of -- of Achay Cuza, and -- and the National Christian Party that had both Goga and Cuza.

A: Well, there was Cuza, of course I met him, but I didn't have very much contact with him, so on. But all through the school year, the '37 - '38 - '39, I could feel it was -- something was boiling up. And I was again, very much aware of what was happening, but without knowing all

the underneath and how the mechanism was working. What was happening is -- well we were all very concerned.

Q: Did you ever see the demonstrations that took place in the street by these groups?

A: No, no, no, we were all but closed in in this thing, and when we used to go out, any event or something locally, that was kept out. But, when he got to the [indecipherable] in the beginning of 1940, then of course I could hear them screaming outside, not yet. Now then -- I did find out that they were screaming because they wanted all the change because of what happened with Codreanu and the [indecipherable] this whole story has ever been brought up and [indecipherable] getting more and more acute. Not yet. [indecipherable] I didn't know.

Q: You made reference earlier, your Majesty, to the political reorganization that your father made here in na -- in the early part of 1938.

A: Mm.

Q: Did he talk with you at that time about what his goals were, for the Frontul Renaşterii Nationale, th-the Front of National Rebirth.

A: Right. That was [indecipherable] in the new constitution we made in 1938, of course we had to learn all about that in school. We practically had to, not quite but nearly, learn it by heart. My reaction to that was -- what shall I say, sort of unknowing of the details on the things brought this thing on, that I only found out much later. Probably the dissatisfaction of my father, because certain politicians would not exactly follow what he would like to do. A certain amount of friction among them. So what I made out later on was that my father got fed up with this way of happenings. So that's why he put them out and introduced this new Frontul Renaşterii, they called it, which was -- looked to me like on the basis of some sort of -- not extreme right, but very right. You know, all uniforms and all sorts of things that were not in our character. So of

course the general population did not really appreciate this sort of thing, but we couldn't do much about it then.

Q: He was supported --

End of Tape One

Beginning Tape Two

Q: -- last year that King Carol was king, and the last year before you became king was a very complicated and troubled period in Romania. It was a year that began with the murder of a prime minister, of Armand Calinescu. Do you remember from that period, the impact of that murder on the royal house and on your father?

A: Well, I do remember something, yes. My impression of the time was that this was the revenge of the Iron Guard for what happened with that group that was killed. That's what we imagine.

What happened afterwards, was a sort of a revolt among the people's feelings because those three people that actually killed the prime minister, were caught, brought to the place where they shot him and were shot in the head, and left them lying there. That I remember. So the reaction of the people was that no matter what they did, how much of -- th-that's not the way to behave in a civilized country. That was the reaction. They even came, a lot of people -- town people, I think and maybe some other places, and they put flowers on there. That I remember. What happened, we were at the time [indecipherable] we were leaving for Torchyn, because there was some work being done on the -- behind the palace where we lived. And we were -- I was at lunch with my father when we heard the -- some screams on the radio, which was cut immediately.

And then here's the master of the household, or the marshalle of the house, as you call it. He was on his way back home, he came back rushing, and came in and said -- I can tell you the word he said was Armand, which was called Armand Calinescu, is dead. The reaction, I saw my father go white in the face [indecipherable] he went up in his room. So wa -- that's how I -- how I saw it, I was there. Well, after that he called me up to his room and started to -- you know, he was on the shock, deep shock. He said a whole bunch of things that I should realize that these people are murderers, that any day he could be shot also, that -- I don't know a whole lot of other details

which I don't quite remember, but I know that he was -- what shall I say, he was -- he -- he was going to pieces, really. Well -- and after that I think they must have talked in the [indecipherable] because I don't know again the details [indecipherable] not explain, were not told. Now that was the reaction, I was there, I li -- I lived with.

Q: Did he ever recover his control of the situation after that?

A: Well, he was in control for quite some time. But then, you know, Europe -- Europe was going to pieces also. Then the -- the way the country had to navigate between all these things going on was getting more and more complicated. As I said before, the real political parties were -- were nowhere present, and he was more or less quite alone with this new thing that they produced. So he was in control, of course, but the feeling in the population was going down and down, so that was a difficulty. This is all the things that I suffered -- I suffered it, I was living with it, but feeling it from the boys at school, and things I saw in the newspaper, but not the actual information, properly be given to me of how and what is going on. That I didn't know.

Q: In 1940, King Carol invited some Iron Guard members, including Horia Sima into the government. How can we understand that?

A: That's one of these things difficult to understand. You see, we got another situation which was rather humiliating for my father in a sense, because this General Antonescu at the time, which was very much against him because of his private life and because of his politics with these party things and so on. [indecipherable] was against my father in certain declarations. So being a officer when this wi -- went down very badly with my father, of course and he put him under house ar -- sort of a house arrest if you can call it, in a monastery. In the monastery [indecipherable] and he put him away. Not -- not prison, but anyhow a semi -- semi-free [indecipherable]. Again, a situation evolving in such a way that suddenly he had to call him back

to put him in some position. See, it's a very, very awkward situation, all this. And I just saw these things happening, but I couldn't get the underneath of it. I know that the Legionnaire [indecipherable] had been contacting Antonescu, but without knowing what and how long -- what was being prepared, that I didn't know at all. I don't want to jump too far forward, but --

Q: [indecipherable]

A: -- but in the beginning of the 40's, of course, on top of the situation -- internal situation and we got [indecipherable] from the Russians, and then we got [indecipherable] for northern Transylvania, and then it got from bad to worse. Only some things that sort of leaked out to me. First of all, the population around me also said we have to do something, we have to have some reaction, and there was no reaction from that point of view. It was quite obvious that we could not -- our army, or anybody else could have possibly stopped the Russians from coming in, but one should have don't it, at least a sort of symbolic something -- resistance, you call it. I remember there was a crown council [indecipherable] after the Russian [indecipherable]. It was a -- I was not involved, but I know it was going on [indecipherable] in Paris, when one of the leading former politicians and professor -- maybe you know the name of Yargo, the historian. He was also not very friendly with my father, but anyhow he was there, because he was part of these people, so he came out of this meeting when I ha -- happened to be there. So he came straight up to me, I could see he was livid, in his face. And he just said a very strong word and he said, all that bunch is a bunch of traitors, and he walked off. And I -- I didn't understand what that was. Then after I found out that they got probably frightened or didn't have backbone or whatever it is, I'm not quite sure, but they all advised that there's nothing to be done, we just have to comply, not to [indecipherable]. And that's one of the revolt of many of the people in Romania, is that we should have at least done something. But that's about how I got to know these things,

cause I was also [indecipherable] put in the sideline that I was also involved because it was the end of my schooling years, just before university, and I was having my final exam with four other boys, just about that same period. Now, I don't know what you call it in English, in Romanian or the French is the baccalaureate, and sh -- all this -- you know, you get sort of torn between the home life and different things. I have to concentrate on my exams, and the same time these things are going on. You're sort of -- get to be in a sort of a haze, you know? So that's in a nutshell also, if I could say.

Q: In this period, the very end of your father's reign, did he ever share with you the idea that he might lose control and have to leave?

A: No, I can't say he did. You know, from -- I had this background because of my mother, you see. And he never talked to her -- about her, or very, very rarely. When I used to come back from seeing her, he never even asked me how she was. So no, I didn't -- I saw something wasn't clicking, you know, that's -- this is just very, very difficult way to explain it, surely, but I think some people maybe will understand.

Q: How did you learn that King Carol had abdicated, and that you were king?

A: Well, this was getting on, as I said before, when -- this is a little before the beginning of September, 1914, when he called back Antonescu. He made a prime minister, I think it was at the time. Accidentally, I happened to be just outside my father's office when Antonescu was in there. And when he came out, he saw me there, he came straight up to me and just said -- he -- he always had this funny habit of talking in the third person, you know, about himself. A-Awkward. So he came up to me and she said General Antonescu guarantees the situation. Then he left. Now what did he guarantee, what was the situation? I had no idea. So we come to the last part of it, this was on the fifth of September. On or before that, he had another audience with Antonescu

when Antonescu demanded that he give up nearly all his prerogatives to Antonescu. That just left him with a few -- put it little bit vulgar in a way, [indecipherable]. So on the fifth of September, we could hear shooting going on outside in the streets. The guards around the palace grounds were reinforced [indecipherable], I met him in the garden. But all that night we stayed awake, until about five o'clock in the morning, and then a courier came from Antonescu with a letter. It was given to him, he opened it, and as he was reading I could vaguely see his color was draining. And he gave this letter to this man that was the gray matter behind him, a man called Ludverrano, just gave it to him, so that he read it also, and then he said to my father in French, because he used to talk a mixture of languages, he said, nothing more to do. So I was, you know, sort of shaken out of a haze, so I just said, well, what's this? So then they read it to me, in which Antonescu demanded his abdication because of all sorts of things, the political situation, this [indecipherable] one thing, my mother and so on, a whole mixture of things, and that -- then -- demanding his abdication. So that was that. That's at five o'clock in the morning, we hadn't slept all night, and funnily enough there's a certain lady there, was a -- a -- present at this same thing. What she had to do with [indecipherable] I don't know, but anyhow. So I went to bed. And about nine o'clock in the morning, the telephone rang. Now one of the ladies, she said, quick, get up, get dressed to take the oath. Now [indecipherable] slept for two hours. So that's what happened. I went back into the palace after I sort of woke up. And there's Antonescu, the patriarch, the president of the Supreme court, and one or two others. Horia Sima was not there. They said he was, but he wasn't. So I took the oath. And as my father had given him all those prerogatives, he put under my nose [indecipherable] so many people didn't understand how I can, but he made me, forced me to sign it, that Romania became a -- a national legionnaire state. You probably don't remember all that stuff. Well, this was, again, because of my non-information of what had

been going on. I did not quite understand what was going on really. So this situation was -- was again, kept quite out of [indecipherable]. Now one thing I must say that I was extremely grateful to Antonescu in all this unpleasantness that he did bring my mother back. And I consider this one thing, that if it wouldn't have been for her all those awful years, I don't know what I would have done, cause she -- she kept me going, in a way.

Q: Right.

A: And bringing back all those years when I was quite small, and so [indecipherable]. So that's the situation I found, and how I f-found myself involved in it.

Q: And what was the tone of Antonescu toward you as king in this period?

A: He was a terribly stubborn man, you know, and very foolishly he had this idea which -- like with -- I discovered it. You know, the -- the French saying says, [indecipherable] father, so is the son. [indecipherable] père, [indecipherable] fils. So he probably had this stupid idea that I was rather influenced, or that I was going to follow in my life like my father. So he kept me away. He certainly was not particularly friendly with me, no, because of this mentality of his. So, all this attitude of his went on til 1944. He was cold, correct if you like, which he was. But personally [indecipherable] around it, you can feel these sort of things, it was cold. He had great respect for my mother, that he did. She managed to put certain things through with him, but that's about all.

Q: The National Legionary State --

A: Mm.

Q: -- for historians, meant for Romania move towards alliance with Germany, and action against the Jews, and --

A: Well. Well, yes --

Q: Can y --

A: -- well --

Q: -- can you speak about this?

A: -- that situation with the Legionnaires, they didn't last very long. I don't know why -- perhaps Antonescu used them or they used him or something to get my father off, but it's very possible. But then was the famous rebellion, they called it. He put an end to that in [indecipherable] with a -- I think, the permission of Hitler somehow, because they were his men, after all. But that was all. And from that, of course, there was an -- a verbal alliance with Romania -- Germany. There was nothing written, as far as I know, and that's how he got us in in a sort of partnership with Nazi Germany, which was not at all in the feelings and mentality of the Romanian people, neither that right, neither at left, neither. We never had these sort of mentalities, but he, having all the prerogatives, he did what he want [indecipherable].

Q: During the Iron Guard rebellion, to which you referred, there was terrible violence against Jews in Bucharest and some in other parts of the country.

A: Mm.

Q: Were you aware of what was happening in the street toward Jews?

A: We found that out a bit, let's say, a few days after. I know -- that I know very well [indecipherable] things that happened there, but I must have something else, it is not with -- not just the Jews, there were many of our own Romanian intellectuals, historians, professors, ministers, they were also in the same thing, they were also murdered together with all the others. But that's, of course [indecipherable] discussed in the feelings of the population, but they couldn't do anything, they -- we -- we all had our hands tied because of Antonescu. And I don't know if he managed to stop this, what was happening with the Jews, or did he just [indecipherable] it out by itself, I'm not quite sure.

Q: Did he talk with you at any time about policy toward the Jews?

A: No, he kept pretty [indecipherable] my father because this thing of the Russian [indecipherable], that they shouldn't get anything, that they were all [indecipherable] the same old stories coming over and over again, you know, but nothing else. You may [indecipherable] already, and many other people that when the war was declared on Russia, my mother heard it on the BBC on the radio. And that same morning we went [indecipherable] I called up his deputy [indecipherable] the small Antonescu we called him, and I said, what's going on? We are [indecipherable] nobody tells me. He said, well, I thought you were going to see it in the newspapers. So you can see the kind of atmosphere that was going on. They declare -- my country declaring war against the Russians, and I'm not even told. And I must find it out in the newspaper, you know. Y-Y-You sort of remain speechless [indecipherable]

Q: Were there people on whom you could count to share information with you about what was happening?

A: Well, this is also something. First of all, I inherited a number of people from my father. Others Antonescu put out immediately and replaced them with his people [indecipherable] and my people run the court. So, you know, you felt you're cornered, spied on, you couldn't actually open your heart to these people and try and discuss properly -- but of course the -- the officers around me came with all sorts of information [indecipherable]. We knew what was going on, but without any possibility of doing anything or even saying anything.

Q: When the war began, there was a simultaneous increase in violence against Jews in -- in Romania. C -- do you recall the -- the events surrounding the -- the pogrom in Iași --

A: Mm.

Q: -- and how -- how you understood that at -- in the -- in j -- June of 1941.

A: Well, we had information, yeah I did have information what was going on, then we had the chief rabbi, which I mentioned before, Șafran, as a young man at the time. He managed, somehow he came and saw me quite often, and saw my mother, and he was giving us information. But in the very, very early stages of this, we could not even manage to talk a word of all this, Antonescu wouldn't even listen. But slowly, slowly during the war, with more and more information coming from Șafran. My mother did there manage somehow, I don't understand how, but she managed somehow to get Antonescu, get some reason in him. And although these things did happen, we can't -- I mean, be honest about it, it did. I can say that no Jews in Romania was ever sent to a concentration camp in Germany or Poland, no th -- no. They did send them into Transnistria, quite a number of them. But maybe you also know that Eichmann was running around in Romania also. Now that was the information we got on the sly, that he was trying to get Antonescu to do the final -- what you call it the final pogrom, and -- but he refused. He let other [indecipherable] things did happen, but not this real bad one, as far as I can know -- I -- as far as [indecipherable] afterward. Not only that, but he allowed that my mother should send a few train wagons into Transnistria with clothes and food for the Jews that were there, [indecipherable]. And it -- it did work to a certain degree. And because of that -- you probably know that also, that my mother's position was getting rather dangerous, from the German point of view, because of this.

Q: Could you speak more about that?

A: Well, the idea that I could understand [indecipherable] you're talking about many, many evenings about all these things, she was completely distressed about it. And as I knew her, if another question that there were Jews, that there were Romanians, that they were this, or they were, whatever it was, they were human beings like us. [indecipherable]. From a Christian point

of view and a moral point of view, these are unconceivable things. And that is why she tried her best to get Antonescu to get something through his head that this is not something that is possible. It's -- she even told me once that if -- I co-can't also say something and try and alter this, I'll be known as Michael the Bad. Sh -- I don't know if she meant it like that, or there -- something, but anyhow. Well, I do remember we had one or two meals with Antonescu, and even the German minister [indecipherable]. And I tried to say something, and my mother said quite more. The atmosphere was glacial. But somehow something did get through to Antonescu and he didn't do the worst that could have been done, as far as I know.

Q: Did you have similar conversations with Mihai Antonescu?

A: Yes, we did also. And he was much more -- how shall I say, more softened on this thing. He tried several times to take my part in some of these problems with Antonescu. Maybe that also helped. That even my mother, let's say [indecipherable] backbone [indecipherable] fight to try and get some sense in [indecipherable] stop as much as possible, what was going on. Because we also in Romania, the moment the war started, what was left of the political parties, the national [indecipherable] laborers and myself and the whole population of Romania, we fully agreed that we have to get back the [indecipherable]. No, no problem there. No pe -- all [indecipherable] what not -- one step of our front, yeah. With the result that we ended up in Stalingrad. And that's how it happened. But I -- I want to say about that that the Romanian people are not the kind who want to go around and do these sort of things. It's not in their character. Whether they like the Jews or not like them, that's beside the point. The fact is that they -- it's not in the character of Romania, at least at that time. [indecipherable]. And that was, in a way we had the moral backing from the feelings in Romania about this thing, that's perhaps why my mother had a little more courage to fight it out, and I too. I mean, we tried to do what we could, and it's very much thanks

to the Rabbi Şafran, that used to come fairly often and tell us what was happening and as far as he could make out, what was going to happen. So we did manage perhaps because of this, to say certain things before something did happen. It's possible.

Q: Were you aware that --

End of Tape Two

Beginning Tape Three

Q: Your majesty, again, talking about the autumn of 1941, were you aware that Antonescu had ordered the deportation to Transnistria of all of the Jews of Bessarabia and northern Buchovina, and the conditions in which these deportations were taking place?

A: Well that part is something which was not very pleasant, because there are -- we had infor -- I had information, like everybody else, through the army, that w-when the Russians came in and invaded -- you know that that part of northeastern Romania, there were quite a lot of Jews living up there. Now, by all means, not all at all, because many had run out, but there were quite a few, unfortunately, that collaborated with the Soviets and some rather unpleasant things did happen there also, that's quite true. Whether they were brought in by the Russians or they were actually ones that were there, I'm not very sure, but something did happen there. Not that that changed the -- the mentality in Romania, no. It was just [indecipherable] about that, that's all.

Q: And when the Romanian army occupied Odessa --

A: Mm.

Q: -- there was an incident involving Romanian -- the Romanian command center, and in reprisal the army executed twent -- 25,000 local Jews, Ukrainian Jews from Odessa. Did this news come to Romania? Was there general awareness? Were you and the Queen mother aware of this?

A: Those are things we found o -- out of course after it happened. You know, that's after, I don't remember who it was exactly, blew up some headquarters, I think, yeah. Now, which part of the army did some of those things there, I'm not quite sure where the order came from, but I think it was the general sort of thing given to the army. But I do know that there was one general commanding around there that protested violently, and as far as I remember he was put out and moved somewhere else. So there was some reaction, that I know. But we found it out probably

say a week, 10 days after th -- all that happened, yes. Now we -- we were all very unhappy about this. But a -- but Antonescu never said a word to me on that. Again, all of these things were -- I was kept in the dark.

Q: You visited the military front on some occasion. Did you witness the conditions in Transnistria itself, in which people were living under -- under Romanian administration?

A: That the people --

Q: That -- in which people were living.

A: Oh. Well, we did -- we knew the general situation, yes, but I said before, these details that were going on underneath and so on, that we only found out much later, after the events.

Q: You have made reference to the action that you took, and that the Queen mother took --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- in 1942, to stop the deportation --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- of Jews from Romania. And indeed the Queen mother has been recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem, and she is rec -- so recognized at our museum as well. I'd like to ask about some of the people who perhaps helped to increase your awareness and the Queen mother's awareness of what was actually happening with the Jews. And I'm -- I -- I'd like to ask you about some individuals because history tells us that certain people were involved, but we don't have real confirmation in most cases. One you have made reference to, and that is Rabbi Șafran. Were you ever approached by other Jewish leaders in the country?

Q: Yes, I was, Filderman, who was, I think, the head of the Jewish community in Romania as far as I remember. But not quite as often as with Rabbi Șafran. But we did -- we did meet him and then, with the heads of the two political parties, [indecipherable] and Brătiano, indirectly

collaborated I'd say, morally with them, because they also tried to push, if not directly with Antonescu, but around somehow. Then he was the patriarch [indecipherable] directly then with Antonescu. As far as I remember there were one or two of his ministers, I think, who also did not agree with this thing and tried to do their best. They couldn't get -- do too much because they would have been immediately put out. I'm not sure of their names, but I know there were some. And a few others, which I do not know exactly who, but I know there were some -- some people in -- among the higher class in Romania that did try to influence [indecipherable].

Q: Mr. Mokshoni Steercha in his memoirs --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- mentions just in two words that the royal family was approached by Baron von Neumann about this. Do you have recollection of that?

A: Well, he was very close to us, with my mother, myself and my father's secretary was in school with me. We used to discuss all these things and try and find the ways and means to sort of try and put some brakes on all this and somehow [indecipherable] the actual thing itself, I'll have to read it again to see how it was, but I know we did have many, many meetings with -- with him when he was in c -- at court with me, so we saw him nearly every day. And whenever something like this came up we always spent several hours discussing it, yes, it's quite true.

Q: And another name that is mentioned in the -- in those memoirs is Max Auschnitt.

A: Auschnitt?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, I knew him before, my father's [indecipherable] because they had [indecipherable] years together with Malaxa. They're both industrialists, and they were in certain circles

[indecipherable] but except for knowing him and meeting him, I didn't have anything to do with him really. I just -- I just --

Q: But you don't -- you don't remember his speaking about this --

A: No, no.

Q: -- about the treatment of the Jews?

A: Because after the -- after my father left, all these people disappeared. They were put away, or left, or something. So after that no, but before [indecipherable]

Q: Were there foreign diplomats who approached you on the matter of the Jews?

A: No. Because I didn't have the occasion to meet with them. Very, very rarely. If -- and the diplomats at that time almost -- you know, the Americans, the British and the others are gone. The Germans, I know the ones that were more or less in that line, but we never got to talk about anything of that, unfortunately. We didn't have enough contact with them.

Q: And René Devek represented American interests here during the war.

A: Not that I remember about --

Q: He was a Swiss representative.

A: -- no. Not that I remember, mm-mm.

Q: You made reference to the patriarch, Nicodem -- did you have contact with Metropolitan Balun on the issue of the Jews?

A: With who? Th --

Q: Rabbi Balun of Transylvania. Metropolitano Balun.

A: Ah, Balun, yes. Not specially because I used to meet all the higher clergy, but I had heard that he'd tried something else, but I never talked with him about it. With the patriarch yes, but not with the others. Patriarch came here several times and he talked to my mother and try and find

something to influence [indecipherable] the others I -- I imagine they must have said something.

I did hear about Balun, but I never personally talked to him about that.

Q: Another church leader, not of the Romanian church, is the papal nunzio, Andrea Casullo --

A: Mm.

Q: -- who was here in Bucharest. Again my question is, was this a person who raised the Jewish issue in a significant way?

A: You see, the situation with Antonescu and me, and all these people that he had put around me, except for [indecipherable] we -- we felt spied upon. All these other big groups, like church dignitary models, well we sht -- imagined that they were proper Christians, what else could I say, but you know, we were really cagey about certain things because just about [indecipherable] Antonescu's, you didn't quite dare go and speak your mind out loudly too much. Not for us, but perhaps those people might start suffering afterwards. So we were very, very careful, maybe it was too much, not to say -- not to be too, too aggressive, you might say. We were aggressive where -- like my mother was with Antonescu to try and get something done, but that was inside here, sort of not in public. That was a very, very strange situation, because all these people around with big ears report immediately -- I even had several occasions when the head of my military house here, a general, went and made a written report to Antonescu about something that I talked about. So you see, we found that out after and we had to sort of pull back a little. It was a -- a situation which very difficult for people outside the world, this sort of thing to quite understand because in Britain and America [indecipherable] you breathe the freedom. We did not got fr-freedom inside ourselves and our mentality what we couldn't dare go out quite like we would have liked to. S-Sometimes here and there we managed, but not as much as we would have liked to.

Q: How were you and the Queen mother able to discuss these matters?

A: Well, the -- we didn't at that time, I don't think we had microphones in the house. That came many years after. But oh, we talked, we talked, we talked days and weeks among ourselves, trying to find some [indecipherable] to impress what we -- our I -- ideas and our mentalities. And that's why something did get through. Well, I can give you another example for instance, Antonescu insisted that I should go on the front. All right, that was probably the right thing to do with our troops. But he wanted me to go to Transnistria. Was that big part of per -- part of land between the Dniester and the Bug. That's where the -- the Jews were put. Well, I refused flatly. I said, I'm not going there. If you want me to go to the front, I'll take an airplane and go to [indecipherable] but I'm not going there. He didn't like that at all, but he had to -- he swallowed it. So, he had unveil a few things like that. We did manage, but let's say the basic part of ruling the country, and that, no.

Q: And your decision not to go to Transnistria, what was the -- the rationale for that decision?

A: What? To go to Transnistria?

Q: To not go to Transnistria.

A: Oh. To Moscow? No.

Q: To Transnistria. When Antonescu wanted you to visit the front.

A: Ah, yes. Well, he thought it was a -- because I was the head of [indecipherable] you see. He was commanding it, but I was the head. It's a very awkward situation there because that was all these arrangements that was left over from my father. So he found, and I suppose it was fairly right, that once our troops were fighting anyhow, I should show myself among them. Which was nat-natural, yes, but not, I don't think for any other reason, but just that, to be among them,

which I did, in two or three places, in [indecipherable] and some other places in the fronts in Romania when it started, also. But only once or twice, not more.

Q: How did you finally convince Antonescu not to deport more Jews?

A: This is a -- it's a very long story, but I'll try and concentrate it somehow, because we were so distressed about going into Russia, because it was none of our business. I know the Romanians -- see, generations, you look at our history, all our troubles that we've had here had always come from the east. So after the Russian revolution, slowly, slowly, all these years, we saw what was going on there, so this was certainly not in our mentality. So the fact to take back Transylvania and -- I mean Bessarabia and Buchovina was perfectly in agreement with that, but not any further. So, as things were getting from bad to worse, we'd realized maybe before that this is going to end extremely badly. We got together in a clandestine -- I sort of picked the words not quite right, if you like, on the sly, with [indecipherable] and our group of some officers, to try and find a way to get out of the war. And this started already in the end of '42, it went all through '43 and '44. That's how we had the -- well, there again you have Antonescu which is an awkward situation [indecipherable] with the Germans, doing everything with the Germans and at the same time he let people from these two parties go out to [indecipherable]. They let them even have, some of them that were in prison, radio transmitter. I-It's one of these situations that doesn't make sense, you know? But anyhow. So we sent some people out to try and contact the allies, that is the American and the Great Britain, to see what we can do. We probably don't want to go on with this [indecipherable] we have to get out. So these discussions and negotiations, recall they went on quite a long time til late '43 and '44, when Britain and America said that we won't discuss with you any more, because you're bringing the Communist Socialist group in this. We were all shocked about these things because what else we gotta do?

We have in Romania an -- an population of 20 million people, about. We had known, about 500 Communist members and another 300 sympathizers. Well, what do they got to do with what -- this, you see? We found that out much later, that it was the Soviet [indecipherable] that we should bring them in. So anyhow, they try and get [indecipherable], the -- Stalingrad happened. The situation was getting more and more dangerously acute. So we finally decided that we must find the right moment to tell Antonescu that he has to stop this war, or make an armistice. So if he doesn't want to, he's got to be put out. That's not very easy to say, but, you know, their job was going up and down inside Romania all the time. The Gestapo sitting here, next to the Royal Palace and the German commander too, recall [indecipherable]. It's not very funny, so to speak, you know? We had -- just when the worst part is happening, the Russian troops were coming close to our borders. The Germans funnily enough, they took two Panzer divisions from Romania and put them up in Poland. Maybe -- maybe you heard about all this. But that gave us a sort of a little breathing space, but we still couldn't do anything on our own completely, because we asked for help from the allies, which we didn't even get an answer from then. And that's because of the Soviets, we knew that after. So, to bring a very long story short, when the front collapsed in Bessarabia in the north, Antonescu came back from the front in the 22nd or something like that, in August, through an indiscretion [indecipherable] we heard the telephone conversation, from his headquarters, saying that Antonescu is going back on the front on the 24th, I think was. Well our arrangement, which have already been done, was to call him on the 26th. We asked for strong American bombardment, for the air force to come here to hit certain spots where the Germans were, and then we hear [indecipherable] 24th. So in a great rush, we organized the [indecipherable] for the few troops that were here, just in case, and I called him, it happened to be the 23rd of August, and [indecipherable] specific date [indecipherable] just like

that. [indecipherable] came. And that is when everybody knows what happened. It's just that I'd like to specify one thing is that it's always been said that it was a coup d'etat, but it -- I don't make coup d'etats. I was the head of state, even if he was the [indecipherable] he was called. So it was perfectly on my prerogative to dismiss him. So, not a coup d'etat, you could call it a political coup if you like, but that's not quite the same thing. And our greatest luck of all was first of all, surprise, because I'm perfectly convinced that the Gestapo and the Secret Services here knew that -- exactly that we were plotting something. The very [indecipherable] informations on the political side, whereas what actually happened was the military side. And that they didn't know. And that was a complete surprise, it took them completely by surprise, and contrary to what very many people like to say, that Romania was liberated by the Soviets, which is absolute nonsense, excuse me the word, because we finish with the Germans in 48 hours, or four days [indecipherable]. When the Russians came here to [indecipherable] there wasn't single German left. We -- we managed to take too, 50,000 prisoners, including the top brass, right down to the last, here and in other parts around the town. The g -- the ra -- Americans bombed those places and that finished the resistance, and there were one or two small pockets north, near the oil fields, which were -- that went pretty quick. And that was all. And that was the greatest luck we had. I think we must have -- how shall I say? God's hand in all this, because you see, another little detail was that when we did this thing in 23rd of August, the Russian advance stopped, or slowed. We didn't react at the time, because we didn't understand, but later we understood what that is. I personally am convinced that -- you remember in Warsaw we had a uprising against the Germans, and the Russians stopped the advance, they let the Germans [indecipherable] the whole lot, and then they came in. Well, that's what they were hoping that was going to happen with us, only we had the luck to finish ourselves, without them. And that

disturbed them very much. But two little details which I can give you if you like, from their point of view is when -- in the palace it was, on the night of the 23rd of August, the Communist man came with -- who was known later on as [indecipherable], you probably know that. He was -- came as another name. But -- but Toscanu, who came in straight to me in the office where I was, and he looked at me and said, what have you done, you've ruined us. So I -- I was speechless. I mean, we'd been discussing this thing for months, and I go -- he tells me that it's ruined him. We understood that later, I'll come to that. When the armistice -- what we call it here, was made up of a commission that went to Moscow. But Toscanu let -- leaked it out after that he went to see some important person i-in Moscow. And he reports to him, he said, what have you done over there, you spoiled our business, something like that. The Romanian word is different. [speaks Romanian]. That's how they put it. So he said, well what -- what is [indecipherable] you know, it's scratching down a bit from the surface, he came [indecipherable] very slow there in the trucks in the northeast, waiting for this to happen, and surely they have that in mind, that the Germans were going to finish us and then they could come and do what they wanted straight away. But here is an very important thing, because I had the supports of the two main parties, the main ones, of course the other two also, but the strongest support of was the army. So, Antonescu was commanding the army. Well, when I gave the order, there wasn't one single defection. And that is something that a -- a -- what I heard would happen in Hungary. It seems that [indecipherable] gave the same order and nothing happened. They didn't listen to him. And I don't know you explained this. Is it the military discipline? Is it the oath they took? Was it because the commanders of the big units and all that, realized as much as us that the whole thing is finished, and that something had to be done? Or is it a combination of all that together? But anyhow, it worked, see. Not many people seem to understand quite all these underneath things

that were going on, cause all our work, political work so to speak, on the sly, that lasted well over a year. It came [indecipherable]. It was, of course, unpleasant for me in a sense, risking the whole thing one -- one side, but Antonescu were not an enemy of mine, he was an adversary, if you can call it like [indecipherable] I just put in English, because he behaved very unpleasantly with us. But anyhow, it was something I had to do, nothing to do with, like many people say, my revenge on Antonescu [indecipherable] that's absolute nonsense. I don't have that. That's not my mentality. But it was something that had to be done, and we did what we had to. And that was my duty towards my country [indecipherable] that's the main thing. With God's help, we managed. What happened afterwards, that is a completely different question. That's not our doing. So our hope for whoever hears this thing will have a better understanding of it.

Q: That's -- that's very interesting, and this puts an end to the Antonescu regime. I want to ask you to come back with me just for a moment --

A: Yeah.

Q: -- to 1942, when you and the queen are pressing Antonescu to not deport the Jews of Ragatz, and southern Transylvania and ask that, were you aware that there was a new plan to deport Romanian Jews to the concentration camps in Poland?

A: Yes, that also came from Rabbi Șafran, the information. And then we had heard that Eichmann was around, running around Romania, and talking to Antonescu, talking to the Secret Service here, Gestapo and what have you, you know. So that's why it was -- my mother was strong about certain things, because it's hard to bring Antonescu's attention, but it was unheard of, the kind of thing like that, it's -- I don't know, she used some arguments, I don't remember exactly, but that got through to him, which --

Q: And you knew that these were extermination camps in Poland?

A: Yeah, which was fairly unusual with Antonescu, because he was very stubborn. But maybe he had a little soft point somewhere that my mother managed to get through. So he did not have anybody sent out to the German and Polish [indecipherable]. Yes, he did Transnistria, that's true, but it could have been much worse. And that was thanks to my mother [indecipherable] she managed to get this, to do something through to him. And much also, thanks to Şafran, because he used to come and tell us what's -- either what is happening or what he knew was going to happen. So that's why we could manage a little bit to do something before.

Q: One story that we hear --

End of Tape Three

Beginning Tape Four

Q: Your Majesty, I -- I have heard that when the Queen Mother wanted to be successful in stopping the deportation of Jews, she threatened Antonescu, and told him that if this did not stop, she would leave the country, and that you would leave the country with her. Is this so, and can you tell us about what actually made the greatest impression on Antonescu, and when you knew that you had been successful?

A: Yes, now that you mention that, I remember vaguely something that my mother told me, that she said that, something like that to Antonescu. Was a little bit I said before, when she tried to get through to him that this is a [indecipherable] all the rest of it [indecipherable] I -- I think that probably when she added something about me, then -- that we would leave, or something like that, I think that's true, yes. Now that you say it, I do remember that she had said something to me, not much detail, but just a few words to that effect, yes.

Q: And was this what made the difference?

A: Yes, you know, she had a very, very deep religious feeling. She was more -- let's say more Christian than religious, inspired by her family. A very, very strong moral sense, and these sort of things that were going on, just -- she could not take them. It was not just sitting still, she had to say something, and sometimes I heard her say to the other people some very, very -- really strong things. And she didn't mince her words at all, so maybe in this particular occasion, she used that type of talk with Antonescu. I don't know, I wasn't there when she said that to him, or maybe she -- I was there, but she said it in a corner. I didn't hear her say it, but she told me afterward, now that you reminded me of it.

Q: And Antonescu's reaction once this was decided, was anger, or what -- what was his reaction?

A: Well, that was the [indecipherable] surely.

Q: You have described already your action to remove Antonescu from power. Within two years after that, you signed his death sentence, and he was executed together with Mihai Antonescu, and Alexianu, the governor of Transnistria, and Mr. Vasiliu from the Ministry of the Interior. When you removed Antonescu from power, did you expect to be signing his death sentence after that?

A: What do you [indecipherable]

Q: Did you expect that the course of events --

A: Oh.

Q: -- following his removal would lead to his death sentence?

A: Well, yes, we did imagine that probably something like that would happen. I mean, the judgement. But the whole way this was done -- you see, this is [indecipherable] one of these cunning things with the Soviets. Could I say something before that? I have been accused of many people that I gave up Antonescu to the Communists, which is not true, for the simple reason, on the night of the 23rd to the 24th of August, we were over our heads with reorganizing the whole thing, making the government, naming ministers, and all the rest that went with it. And then, some officers in the general staff, through one of my [indecipherable] said, you must leave Bucharest as quick as possible, because there's going to be s -- reprisals from the Germans, as the American bombing couldn't have happened before the 26th. So we all packed up in a hurry, and I left Bucharest at around two or half past two in the morning. We went out to the west [indecipherable] the country. Now, we had organized with the two parties to have a team that's going to take over Antonescu and take care of him, because we didn't want something to happen with him like with Mussolini, get him out. So, unfortunately these two parties did not have anybody ready because it happened too quick. The only one that had a team ready of course, was

the Communists [indecipherable]. So around four in the morning they came to the palace and said, we have to take care of this thing, because if nothing happens, and th -- the Prime Minister I named, General Sănătescu, maybe in a little moment of weakness, let them take him. So they took him to the seat of the Communist party in Bucharest, yeah, a place called [indecipherable]. Well, I was in -- already in the western part of the country, how could I have done that, see? Now, the Communists, as I was coming to say is that they took -- when the Russians came in here, of course they took him, Moscow -- Lubyen, I think, the prison. They kept him for two years, about. So what happened in the meantime, the Russian troops were here, they started messing up all the political parts, messing up what I was trying to do. [indecipherable] come in here and smashing door in my office, [indecipherable] on the table [indecipherable] forcing me to put Groza on, bringing in all the Communists in '45. So it's not -- th-things started to deteriorate, I wouldn't say very, very fast, but very clearly. So, in the meantime the population was getting sort of worked up, moderately at least. So in the two years that Antonescu was hir -- kept by the Russians, th-the people started to see that perhaps was better during Antonescu's time than it was now. Which, in fact, it was, unfortunately, except for the war. So when Antonescu got back and put on trial, all these people were sort of said, after all, he's done something, these people, look what they're doing, see? On that I'm convinced that the way they did this trial, which was a farce, all of it fixed beforehand like the Nazis used to do also, like in Russia. It was done I thi -- I -- felt there -- m-maybe I think of it now, to -- to bring down my image. See -- you see, in that time I don't know -- want to know everything that's [indecipherable] not with the thing behind it. Now what, constitutionally speaking, my [indecipherable] my situation was that no act is valid that I would sign without the counter-signature of the minister. That is in our constitution because it's the minister that countersigns

that is responsible, not me. So, when they came out with the sentences -- now, the Minister of Justice at the time, Patrascanu came [indecipherable] saying -- asking for pardon, which Antonescu did not do. With -- his lawyer did it, but not him. So on, and then he said no, no, no, one or two years. So constitutionally speaking, what will be my position? I could refuse that and sign something else, but nothing will have happened. That's one thing. And the second complication was that -- that there were Soviets behind it. I'm absolutely certain [indecipherable] American. So even if anybody would have wanted to [indecipherable] this thing, it would not have been possible. And that's how it happened. And the way they did that was -- excuse me the word, was absolutely disgusting. Cause after all, he was a patriot, he loved his country, he tried to defeat [indecipherable] and so on. He -- politically he did it for the -- my question was what could we do? [indecipherable] But his feelings were the Romanian [indecipherable]. Although he was [indecipherable] things that went on, still. And the way this was done was -- was not a trial, they were murderers, to put it quite frankly, and was very distressing for me and my mother and all the others, ever after what we been though. And the way he ended, I didn't like it, although probably something had to be done, you couldn't avoid that, you know. Not quite like that, you know? No matter what he did and all that, he is still [indecipherable] you know, they did [indecipherable]

Q: When the war ended, your Majesty, you faced another huge challenge here, and you had begun to talk about it. You showed great courage in opposing the communization of Romania. After four years of war, and this invasion of the Soviet Union that you have referred to, do you believe it was possible for Romania to resist the imposition of a Communist regime? That it was realistic to think that this was possible?

Q: Well, all these things that happened after [indecipherable] circles of high politics in the world, that were not our doings. And we were in a way, the victims of all these things. I tried to do what I could to put brakes on it. And because it was -- these arrangements were in high circles. I don't mean to be unfair, misunderstanding, but we did not get the proper backing and help from the western allies. We know [indecipherable] percentages. So the Soviets that came here, they were the monsters and they would do what they want, and how they wanted. I know there were a lot of -- a lot of -- lot of contacts with the American person in [indecipherable] commission and the British one. And they were doing what they could here, locally. And they understood the situation very well, but they didn't, as far as I can make out get the true backing from Washington and London [indecipherable] these big arrangements. And there's not much more I can tell you about that. I did what I could with who I could, whether it's [indecipherable] I say, a losing battle in a way, but at least one thing I can say, that like [indecipherable] like my mother, too. Maybe we lost our battle, at least we lost it with some dignity, with our heads up that we did at least tried to do what we could to save what we could -- be saved. It didn't work, but not because of us.

Q: Looking back 50 years to this period of time that we have talked about, and especially the years when you were king, from 1940 through 1947, how would you characterize those years in Romania's history?

A: It's difficult to put that in one word. What could I say? Besides being sad, it was more than frustrating. You see what was happening, you have your hands tied. I was here in the position which was supposed to do more, and I couldn't. You know, it's frustrating, perhaps you're not strong enough, but I don't know what other words to put in it. We fought like lions and tigers. Our conscience, my mother and myself, is clear. We had hands tied, you know, that's why I say

frustrating, we were -- I don't know a better word for that, but to say it was difficult is a -- an understatement of [indecipherable] you know. That's how things happen sometimes, you know. You know, they say sometimes very often that the ways of the lord are many and unpenetrable. We never quite know what these meanings are, why these things happen. You try to do the best, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. I don't know. I don't want to be [indecipherable] you know, but I mean, you know -- you -- you think about these thing, you can't put it out of your mind sometime. And that's one side -- all right, that's me personally, you see, but I look at what's happened to this part of Europe and my country. So that [indecipherable] on top of it. Difficult to explain sometime, very difficult. People say you get bitter, yes, you do get bitter sometimes, but if you let bitterness lead you, that means you go down the drain with it. That's not the way to do thing. I mean, it's sad and it's painful, it's wounds you have, but you might -- might let that take you -- lead you, because then you -- then you say, I'm not so good at all. So we tried at least. I -- I hope I managed to [indecipherable].

Q: I would like to thank you very much for sharing these thoughts with us today. Thank you, your Majesty.

A: Well, I can perhaps add something, that with all these awful things that have been happening since the war, especially in this part of Europe and Romania, being on a program like yours now, I do hope that maybe I can -- I brought some light into some events, to explain certain things which I'm quite convinced that very few people know. [indecipherable] and the thing happens as [indecipherable] you see events, you start making up your mind. Make decisions, or have ideas which are not actually based on the full knowledge of what's what. And that is what I've been trying all these years to sort of bring out. To stop looking at the surface of things, which are bad or good, whatever it is. What -- the point it, why have we got to a certain point if you don't

understand what's happened underneath. And that is a sort of grudge I have against many people, that they dis -- they discuss the -- the signs on the surface, without bothering to go underneath and find out why, what are the causes of these things, and to make -- to try and get that thing healed up. And then the rest should follow. You know, they say sometimes that it's a very -- how most people cut the branches [indecipherable] off, but a very, very few that look at the underneath of the -- at the roots of it. And that's what I wish so much, with all this modern world now and the people that -- that -- you know, everything's [indecipherable] all over the place now, to -- to try and understand why did certain things happen, and the tragedy of the whole -- what will you say, let's say in this part of Europe, a hundred million people here. And unfortunately it's happening in other places also now. And we feel terrible when we see these thing [indecipherable] here, of course, because it's my country, but when you see other things that happen -- look at New York now. Which just -- I don't know. We -- we have another Romanian saying that says, when God wants to mock the people, they take [indecipherable]. I don't like that, but when you see what's happening in the world these days, you really don't know. You can't understand any more, sometime. Anyhow, I that what -- I mean they're saying now that they'll be a better understanding, at least as far as we are concerned, what happened. And I thank you very much for it.

Q: Thank you, sir.

End of Tape Four

Conclusion of Interview