



**“Upon accession to the throne,
I swore I would do everything
in my power so that my country
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and progress for everyone.”**

King Peter I

Coronation and Anointment of King Peter I, 21 September – 9 October 1904



The Coronation of King Peter I had undoubtedly great significance and importance for internal and international consolidation of the new sovereign. All European courts accepted the new King as a “brother” and wished him a long and prosperous reign. Some anticipated the beginning of new times in the Balkans and great powers clashes caused by them. The King’s next step was to boost certain principles in the politics and life of Serbia, which he believed were necessary for further advancement, as well as for Serbia joining the developed European countries.

On 21 September 1904, Belgrade was crowded with people and parading soldiers. The Cathedral was filled with guests. In its middle, in front of the altar, there was a “sky” made of red velvet, richly embroidered in gold, and beneath it there was the Royal Throne. At eight o’clock, the King set off from the Palace, escorted by his sons, and Prince Danilo of Monte-

negro who rode between them. Behind them followed the cortege. In front of the church the King was welcomed by the arch hierarchs and priests who took him to the Throne. The coronation began by reading of Nicene Creed, after which the King wore the Royal mantle. Then the King himself put the Crown on his head, took the scepter in his right hand, the orb in his left hand, and sat on the Throne. The Holy Liturgy was celebrated after which the King took communion. Then fully dressed, he went out from the Cathedral, mounted the horse, and escorted by the Guard returned to the Palace. In the Ballroom, under a baldachin, and decorated Throne, he received congratulations. In the afternoon, he took a walk in the city streets, where there was a show program, consisting of three “walls”, each representing the history of Serbia: the age of Emperor Dusan, the age of Karadjordje, and contemporary Serbia. All participants of the “walls” were dressed in period costumes. In the evening, the King attended a gala play in the National Theatre.

The next day, 22 September, there was a big military parade at Banjica field. The King rode past the lined troops and returned to the podium, in front of which various arms of service marched. In the afternoon, he opened the Military Museum, and in the evening there was a reception at the Palace, with about 800 guests. During the evening, the King made two toasts – the first to the Serbian people and its representatives, and the second to Prince Nikola of Montenegro and the Crown Prince Danilo. In the first one he emphasized that the Serbian people has connected its contemporary history with the tradition of previous ages by the act of coronation. Foreign rule and a century of internal struggles had prevented Serbia of taking the way of development. “Upon accession to the throne, I swore I would do everything in my power so that my country begins an era of peace and progress for everyone.” The beginning of this was marked by the coronation. In the end, the King thanked in his name and in the name of the Serbian people to the rulers and heads of states whose representatives attended the ceremony. The King’s words, although courteous, expressed his intention to connect himself and his ancestors with the glory of Nemanjic Serbia. In general, the coronation made a great impression on everybody present. Belgrade was in complete order, the atmosphere among the people was outstanding, and the success of the coronation program absolute. King Peter made his wish come true.

The anointment of King Peter I was performed by Metropolitan Inokentie, in the presence of arch hierarchs and clergy of the Serbian Orthodox Church, in Zica Monastery on 9 October 1904. The ceremony of anointment was attended by the Government, the Speaker of the National Parliament, the President of the State Council, Chancellor of the Office of the Royal Orders, the Chief of the General Staff, the Chairman of the Coronation Board, commanders of the Danube and Sumadija divisions commanders of other military units, high state officials and local authorities from Cacak region. The day after the anointment, the King returned to Belgrade with his escort, after a short stop in Kragujevac.

In his speech on the occasion, the King expressed his belief that the anointment was an important act by which the Serbian Orthodox Church passed on significant responsibility to him. Beside in the court of history, he would have to answer for his deeds to the judgment of the Almighty. He reminded that the anointment was important because the ruler becomes the guardian of the great national tradition. In accordance with that, he emphasized his loyalty to the Serbian Orthodox Church, that through centuries was the protector of national symbols and national self-awareness, and its mission remained unaltered. Metropolitan Inokentie replied that the Serbian Orthodox Church would gladly accept the King's words about its role, and promised it would be devoted to its mission.

The program of the coronation was concluded.

(Dragoljub Zivojinovic, "King Peter I Karadjordjevic")

King Peter I



King Peter I Karadjordjevic was the fifth child of Prince Aleksandar I and Princess Persida (the daughter of Father Mateja Nenadovic) on St. Peter's Day, 11 July 1844. He finished elementary and high school in Belgrade, and continued his education at Venel – Ollivier Institute in Geneva. After his graduation, Prince Peter went to College Saint Barb in 1861, and then in 1862 he enrolled in the famous French military academy Saint Cyre, which he completed in 1864. While he was in Paris he showed interest in photography and painting, and kept improving his military and political education. That broadened his views on liberalism, parliamentarianism, democracy and its institutions. In the beginning of 1868, when he was only 24, Prince Peter printed his translation of John Stuart Mill's essay "On Liberty", with his preface, which later became his political program.

After the assassination of Prince Mihailo Obrenovic in May 1868, the political circles close to the Obrenovic dynasty included a paragraph in the new Constitution, prohibiting the Karadjordjevic's to return to Serbia and confiscating their property.

Prince Peter joined the Foreign Legion in 1870, fought numerous battles and was decorated with the Legion of Honour. In 1875 he took part in the Bosnian-Herzegovinian uprising. After the failure of the Topola rebellion in 1877 he continued his political activities.

In the summer of 1883 he married Princess Ljubica-Zorka, the eldest daughter of the Montenegrin Prince Nikola in Cetinje, Montenegro. They had five children: two daughters Jelena and Milena and three sons Djordje (renounced his right to the throne in 1909), Aleksandar and Andrija (died as a child). After a short time in Paris, the Karadjordjevic family moved to Cetinje, where they lived for ten years. Due to his poor financial situation, Prince Peter sold

his residence in Paris in 1894 and settled in Geneva with his family. His contacts with people from Serbia continued, above all with Nikola Pasic, the leader of the Radical Party.

During 1897 Prince Peter left for Russia and was received by Czar Nikola II. Three years later, he tried to make an agreement with King Aleksandar Obrenovic regarding the recognition of title of Prince and return of confiscated property, but with no success. Prince Peter reinforced his political activity for his return to Serbia. In 1901 he intensified his efforts to get closer to Austro-Hungary, offering his political program.

In the night of 28 May 1903 army officers assassinated King Aleksandar and Queen Draga Obrenovic in conspiracy. The army organized a Coup d'Etat and proclaimed Prince Peter Karadjordjevic King of Serbia, which was confirmed by the National Parliament on 15 June. After 45 years the Karadjordjevic family regained the leadership of the Serbian state, starting a new era in its development. "I want to be a true constitutional King of Serbia" – said King Peter I in his announcement on the day of taking his oath.

Since the beginning of his reign, King Peter I faced serious obstacles. The country was disrupted by interior political fights and Austro-Hungary, benevolent towards the new Serbian King at first, soon became an exposed enemy of Serbia, particularly after the crisis caused by the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1908.

The first Balkan War against Turkey in 1912 and the second – against Bulgaria in 1913, ended in the triumph of the Serbian Army under the supreme command of King Peter I, and in liberation of Raska District, Kosovo, Metohia and Macedonia, and their uniting with Serbia.

The constant and hard endeavors in the Balkan wars resulted in King Peter's deteriorating health condition and on 24 June 1914 he re-



assigned his royal prerogatives to Crown Prince Aleksandar. A month later Austro-Hungary declared war on Serbia, which initiated the World War I. After the victories of the battles of Cer and Kolubara in 1914, Germany and Bulgaria entered in the war in 1915 and the Serbian Army was forced to withdraw and leave the country. The Albanian Golgotha furthermore influenced the health of the aging King. However, he lived and witnessed victory and liberation of Serbia and the establishment of the new country the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.

He died on 16 August 1921 in Belgrade and was buried in his Endowment, the Memorial Church of St. George in Oplenac. For his merits in the Balkan wars and World War I, he is referred to as King Peter I, The Liberator.

The Pageantry of HM King Peter I's Coronation

The coronation ceremony took three days – 20, 21 and 22 September 1904.

On 20 September, at 5:30 p.m. the Royal Regalia were transferred from the Palace to the Cathedral in the following order:

Forward two King's Heralds on horses.

A platoon of the King's Guards on horses.

The King's Banner, carried by an officer of the King's Guards.

The Crown, carried by the President of the Ministerial Council, and the Orb, carried by the Speaker of the National Parliament (both in one Palace carriage).

The Scepter, carried by the Minister of Defense, and the King's Cape, carried by the President of the State Council (both in another Palace carriage).

The second platoon of the King's Guards on horses.

His Eminence Metropolitan with the Bishops and clergy welcomed the King's insignia in front of the Church, consecrated them, and then the cortege returned to the Palace and gave the King's Banner to the First Adjutant of HM the King.

On 21 September, the troops were lined to salute the procession, which set off from the Palace at 8 o'clock in the morning, in the following order:

Two King's Heralds,

Half-squadron of the cavalry,

The first Palace carriage with the Governors of the King's sons.

The second Palace carriage with the Palace Marshal and General Manager

The third Palace carriage : the Palace Lady and the King's Secretary,

A platoon of the King's Horse Guards,

Two piqueurs,

HRH Princess Elizabeth and HH Prince Paul in a parade Palace carriage,

A platoon of the King's Horse Guards,

Representatives of the Army regiments with the regimental standards,

Heralds carrying the Royal coat of arms,

Herald carrying the King's Banner,

HM King Peter I with His sons on horses and escorts.

A platoon of the King's Horse Guards.

A company of the King's Guards was lined up in front of the Cathedral.

On 22 September in the morning troop inspection and parade in Banjica.

And on 9 October 1904, the anointment of HM the King took place in the Monastery of Zica. The ceremony was conducted in the following order:

On 5 October HM the King set off at 5:30 a.m. with his escort by the Palace train for Kragujevac, where he arrived at 9:00 a.m., and from there went on to Kraljevo by car, escorted by his Guards. He arrived in Kraljevo at 1:00 p.m.

On 6 October at 6:00 a.m. a trip to Studenica, where the King arrived at 1:00 p.m.

On 7 October HM the King attended the Monastery's Patron Saint's Day celebration – St. Stephen the First Crowned – during which a Holy Liturgy was celebrated and the holy relics of the Saint King were placed in the new silver coffin, the present from the late Princess Persida, the mother of HM King Peter I. The return to Kraljevo was at 6:00 p.m.

On 8 October HM the King attended a vigil at the Monastery of Zica and returned to Kraljevo.

On 9 October anointment with Holy Liturgy at the Monastery of Zica, following the ritual of the Serbian Orthodox Church. The same day, return to Kraljevo, and on 10 October return to Kragujevac by car and further on by the Palace train to Belgrade, where the King arrived at 9:30 p.m.

About Coronation



Return of the King's cortège to the Palace after the coronation, 21 september 1904

Coronation and anointment is a complex act of consecration with which the sovereign, who has already been invested with actual state power, solemnly takes the royal insignia, regalia, and becomes God's anointee. Coronation is the ritual unlike anointment which is a holy secret. Coronation and anointment can be performed as part of a unique act of ruler's consecration or be separated in time and place. As part of a historical practice some rulers were consecrated only by coronation or anointment, or they simply ascended throne with neither of them but with a formal procedure that was at the time and place adjusted to circumstances or tradition that were consider valid. Bearing in mind religious, political and symbolic importance of coronation, structure of the ritual, content of the church ritual, composition of prayers, order of investiture, participants in the ceremonies, as well as content of verbal formulae, they are extremely important for insight into real status of various state, confessional, political and social structures and their mutual relations.

Medieval Serbian coronations of the rulers were performed in accordance with religious circumstances and position of the Serbs at the time. Despite highly modest resources, it seems that the coronation and anointment ritual always had with the Serbs certain particularities in relation to the corresponding Roman and Byzantine Canon. This is partly explained with particularity of the Serbian attitude to the State and Church and partly with extremely strong and confronting influences of the East and West.

A grand cycle of the Nemanjic coronations commenced with Stephen the First-Crowned's coronation. According to the different sources, Stephen the First-Crowned was crowned the King in Zica Monastery in 1217, and if there was a second coronation it took place around 1221. The basis of the coronation ritual was Byzantine practice.

When the Serbian Kingdom restoration was declared in 1882, coronation of the Serbian Monarch was taken into consideration and King Milan I was in contact with Viennese court and raised the issue of possible borrowing of the so called Lazar's Crown (Prince of Transylvania Istvan Boczkai's crown) to that end. The initiative was not carried out and the first Royal coronation in the renewed Serbia took place as late as 1804. It was King Peter I's own decision to crown himself, probably wanting to confirm the legitimacy of his right to the Serbian throne and to partly remove negative consequences of bloody extinction of the previous Dynasty with this solemn and above all significant act. Coronation of Peter I was performed on 21 September 1904 in the Belgrade Cathedral. The ritual and service were based on the form and protocol of Russian imperial coronation.

About Anointment



HM King Peter I during the anointment ceremony in Zica monastery, 9 October 1904

The act of anointment, as complementary to the coronation act, in its essence is incomparably more significant in the spiritual and religious respect. As a part of the medieval Serbian act a ruler would bow his head to the celebrant (Arch Hierarch) who would say a prayer for anointment, mentioning prophet Samuel and the Old Testament emperor David.

Serbian rulers – Princes from the Obrenovic Dynasty, as vassal rulers, were invested in form of charter, cloak and a presentation sabre from the Sultan, and they could not lay formal claim to the right of consecration by coronation and anointment. However, the decision to introduce anointment can probably be explained by Prince Milos's wish to conform and strengthen his own ascent to power and hereditary right to Prince's dignity with his people by most important act of church consecration and receiving God's blessing. And they showed considerable consistency. All the Princes from Milos's Dynasty were anointed on ascending the throne: Milos in 1830, Mihailo in 1840 and Milan in 1868. All anointments were performed in Belgrade.

The service itself (repeated in 1889 when King Alexander I was anointed and in 1904 when King Peter I was anointed in Zica Monastery) always had the same structure and form: vigil before the service, Holy Liturgy, anointing of the ruler, communion of the ruler and “Long live the King”.

Some variations were introduced in the coronation ceremony of King Petar I, the most important of which was separating the holy secret of anointment, which should follow ruler’s communion, according to the Russian model. But, in this case, it was arranged as a special function performed in Zica Monastery, on 9 October 1904.

(Dragomir Acovic, “Monarchy through the Centuries”)



THE REGALIA

ABOUT THE FILM “CORONATION OF HM KING PETER I”

The first public film projection in Serbia was arranged by the Lumiere brothers in Belgrade, on 6 June 1896, at the “Golden Cross” restaurant, which used to be in the place where today is “Dusan’s Town” restaurant.

The oldest preserved film about Serbia and Belgrade was taken in 1904 for the coronation of HM King Peter I Karadjordjevic. The film was the work of the honorary consul of Serbia in Sheffield, United Kingdom, Arnold Muire Wilson, and the cameraman Frank Storm Mottershaw, who at the beginning of the twentieth century was considered to be one of the most famous film makers in Britain.

The film Coronation of King Peter I, or more precisely the material kept today at the Museum of the Yugoslav Film Archive, belongs to the so called great film reports and it contains 6 scenes: 1. Streets of Belgrade; 2. Cortège on its way to the Belgrade Cathedral on the Coronation Day; 3. Cortège after the Coronation from the church to the Palace; 4. National pageant showing the development of the Serbian armed forces up to 1904; 5. The view of the Belgrade fortress and port; 6. Review of the troops of all services at Banjica hill.

The first scene of the material is titled “Streets of Belgrade”, its length is 5 minutes and 14 seconds, with 38 sequences. All sequences have an air of festive atmosphere. People are dressed up, in the city manner, mostly wearing hats, some in tailcoats and top hats. Elegant ladies wearing hats lavishly decorated with flowers and fruit. Coachmen in liveries driving ornately decorated carriages. Everyone is dignified, slowly walking awaiting the great event and acting naturally in front of the film camera, as if not noticing it, or as if they already knew it well.

Many men and women are dressed in folklore costumes. Particularly women look nice in their richly quilted skirts. For these days about 50,000 people came to Belgrade from the country, mostly from villages, but also from other towns and also from outside Serbia where Serbs lived, and that gave a special flair to the city of about 70,000 inhabitants. Mottershaw as an Englishman an islander, was fascinated by the richness and the beauty of the patterns and the colors of the women’s dresses. He tried to record that as best as he could and paid great attention to it. Many sequences show dignified men with moustaches, wearing fur hats and sajkacas (Serbian national cap).

The material shot at Terazije square has a lot of sequences with the people in folklore costumes, which does not mean that in those days there were a lot of peasants living in Belgrade, as it was superficially concluded by some film historians who did know the film language and the way films were made then. Attractive costumes were seen for the first time by the cameraman, while the European suits and dresses, tailcoats and top hats he considered ordinary and - not so interesting for the film report about the coronation of an unknown king from the Balkans.

The second scene is titled “Cortege on its way to the Belgrade Cathedral on Coronation Day”, the length is 4 minutes and 49 seconds and it has 3 sequences. The passing of HM King Peter I on a lively white horse that seems to be dancing in the street has a deep symbolic meaning. This is a unique passing of the crowned King. In all the reports about the coronation ceremonies it was usual to show the sovereigns in comfortable carriages surrounded by many attendants and big escorts.

The third scene is titled “Cortege after the Coronation from the church to the Palace”, the entire length is 9 minutes and with 5 sequences. The King with the Crown on his head comes into the scene with two of his heralds riding horses and carrying his flag and coat of arms. This is completely unknown practice in the ceremonies of previous European coronations that were filmed. Instead of the usual carriage, the King chose to ride a white horse and come as close and open as possible to the people who were greeting him. He wishes to personify his knightly and protective role, to show his modesty, and to show he is the King to the measure of his people. He is the people’s King, the defender and liberator. The people will later call him “the White King”, when he finally leads them to the final victory against the Ottoman and Austro Hungarian Empires.-

The fourth scene is titled “National pageant showing the development of the Serbian armed forces up to 1904”, the length is 6 minutes and 43 seconds, and it has 19 sequences. Historical pageant in the costumes of various periods was organized to celebrate the Centennial of The First Serbian Uprising. It consisted of three parts: The First Age – Nemanjic’s state and Emperor Dusan as the embodiment of the Serbian medieval state’s power. The Second Age – The First Serbian Uprising and Karadjordje, and The New Age – contemporary army, volunteers, various associations and corporations.

The fifth scene is titled “The view of the Belgrade fortress and port”, the length is 1 minute and 38 seconds, with 5 sequences, and it was probably shot the day before or the day after the Coronation.

The sixth and the last scene of the filmed material that was about the Coronation is titled “Review of the troops of all services at Banjica hill”, in the length is 9 minutes and 33 seconds.

“Cinematographic pictures” – Coronation of King Peter I, were shown to the public at the National Theatre in Belgrade on 10 April 1905. The day later, “Evening News” newspaper wrote “the pictures are very nice and pleasing to the viewers”. “Projection of these images” took about 15 minutes.

In the book “Historian and Film” by Paul Smith, published by Cambridge University Press in 1976, this film got a very favorable critic: “Fulfilling of all the basic principles and techniques of the content processing in sequences, and manipulating with time in editing, in order to tell a story in the report, can already be seen the film about the coronation of the Serbian King Peter. Perhaps for the first time here, a classic demonstration of telling the news through a film was applied here. This film can be taken as a “good story” not only by the film editors from the times of silent movies and film journals, but also by the editors of any of today’s TV stations”.

The quality of the filmed material about the Coronation of HM King Peter I, made in 1904, reveals that it contains, without a doubt, a very important piece of film work with great artistic and dynamic power. In front of the viewers, film lovers and scientists, it is an extraordinary film, unusual in its form, original in its editing and screenplay solutions brilliant in its compositions and bold camera moves of its cameraman and author Frank Mottershaw.

Marko Babac