



Siam and World War 1

An International History

Stefan Hell

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Territory	World excluding Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam
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- A study on the part Thailand, then 'Siam', played in WW1, told through personal stories
- Includes fascinating personal stories of a Thai man who was among the few survivors of a boat sank by a German torpedo, Thai students interned in a German Schloss, and of the Germans and Austrians interned in Bangkok

100 years ago Siam declared war on Germany. In the early morning hours of 22 July 1917, army units and gendarmerie called the roughly 200 completely unsuspecting German and Austro-Hungarian men in Bangkok out of their beds, presented them with the declaration of war and went on to arrest them. At the same time, marine units boarded the nine ocean going German ships anchored on the river, capturing what was considered by all to be the greatest prize. With these events began Siam's 17 months at war with two European powers.

The story of how these 17 months unfolded in Siam and in Europe is at the heart of this book. It is a complex tale interweaving political, diplomatic, military, cultural and social history. The book introduces adventurous and scared Thai soldiers on the battlefields of the Western Front, arrogant European politicians and diplomats convinced of their racial and cultural superiority, shrewd Thai officials beating the West at its own game of imperialism, princes rivalling over influence and power, German businessmen imprisoned by "Orientals", Thai students caught up in world events and submarine attacks, and the King of Siam himself.

Siam's participation in World War I was the single most important international event for contemporaries in the kingdom, its symbolism unmatched by any other occurrence of the times. The book is the first-ever extensively researched study of Siam and World War I in all its facets. By combining primary sources from Thailand, Germany, France, Great Britain, and Austria, the study describes local events in a global context and explains how world events manifested themselves in the royal palaces and on the streets of Bangkok. The legacy of the events a century ago is remarkably tangible even today, and the book connects the reader with this legacy.

The book is easily accessible to the non-specialist reader interested in history and political affairs, as it describes numerous colourful episodes and vignettes, and includes over 300 rare photographs and illustrations, reproduced in high-quality print.

Stefan Hell holds a PhD degree in History from Leiden University and an MA degree from Tübingen University. His research interests focus on the history of international organization and international aspects of Asian history. He has published a book on the Sino-Japanese conflict of 1931-33, articles and book chapters, and has co-edited several books. He is the author of *Siam and the League of Nations: Modernisation, Sovereignty and Multilateral Diplomacy, 1920-1940*, published by River Books. Stefan has been working as a management and development consultant in various Asian and European countries for the past 20 years, among others for the European Union, ASEAN, the Asian Development Bank and the British Council. Since 2011, he has been based in Jakarta, where he supports ASEAN's regional integration in a variety of policy areas.