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Siam and the League of Nations : modernization, sovereignty, and multilateral diplomacy, 1920-1940

Hell, S.M.

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Stellingen

attached to the dissertation by Stefan Hell, entitled
*Siam and the League of Nations: Modernization, Sovereignty and Multilateral
Diplomacy, 1920-1940*, defended at Leiden University, 31 October 2007

1. Siam's abstention in the voting of the League of Nations condemning Japan in 1933 was an expression of its policy of international neutrality, not a pro-Japanese stance. (*contra Benjamin A. Batson, The End of Absolute Monarchy in Siam, 1984, p. 179*)
2. The League of Nations brought about profound changes among the Thai elite regarding opium consumption and government opium policies, which ultimately led to the abolishment of legal opium consumption. (*this dissertation, ch. 4*)
3. Relations between Siam and the League of Nations were more intensive during the 1920s than the 1930s. (*contra Rong Syamananda, A History of Thailand, 1990, p. 153*)
4. The multilateral dimension of Siam's foreign policy during the first half of the twentieth century emphasizes the country's role as an independent international actor in times of Western colonialism in Asia. (*a central argument in this dissertation*)
5. Siam's membership of the League of Nations formed a key element of the kingdom's efforts to regain full sovereignty in the 1920s. (*supplementing Peter B. Oblas, Siam's Efforts to Revise the Unequal Treaty System in the Sixth Reign, 1910-1925, 1974*)
6. The assessment of the League of Nations as a deficient "first try" in international organization is too simplistic; the League achieved important successes in many particularly progressive fields of its work. (*pro Frederick S. Northedge, The League of Nations, its Life and Times 1920-1946, 1988, p. 66*)
7. The next succession to the Thai throne is likely to result in a change of the role that monarchy plays in Thai society, perhaps similar to the succession of 1910.
8. The United Nations system requires continuous strengthening, from Security Council reform to increased financial resources and improved legal instruments, since it constitutes the world's only institution capable of dealing with the various effects of globalization in an adequate manner.
9. The state of invaluable historical documents in Thailand is alarming; concerted domestic and international efforts are required to save them from deterioration.
10. The undemocratic government of Vietnam will maintain social stability without granting increased political freedom as long as it guarantees rising living standards for a majority of the population resulting from sound economic policies.
11. Western development aid to non-industrialized and transitional countries needs to be tied to stronger commitments by beneficiaries in order to increase aid effectiveness and curb corruption.
12. Italy and Thailand possess the most refined cuisines in the world.