นัยสำคัญของความสัมพันธ์ส่วนพระองค์ระหว่างราชสำนักรัสเซียกับราชสำนักสยาม ในช่วงปลายคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 19 -ต้นคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 20

นางสาวเอกาเทอรินา วลาดิมิรอฟนา พูกาเชวา

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PERSONAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL FAMILY AND THE ROYAL COURT OF SIAM IN THE LATE 19TH-EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

Ms. Ekaterina Vladimirovna Pugacheva

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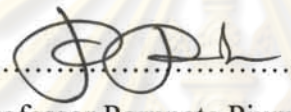

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เอกาเทอรินา วลาดิมิรอฟนา พูกาเชวา: นัยสำคัญของความสัมพันธ์ส่วนพระองค์ระหว่างราชสำนักรัสเซียกับราชสำนักสยามในช่วงปลายคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 19 ถึงต้นคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 20 (THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PERSONAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL FAMILY AND THE ROYAL COURT OF SIAM IN THE LATE 19TH-EARLY 20TH CENTURIES) อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: อ. ดร. รมย์ ภิรมนตรี, อ. ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์ร่วม: ดร. ภราดร รังสิมาภรณ์, 103 หน้า

วิทยานิพนธ์นี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาบทบาทและบริบทของความสัมพันธ์ส่วนพระองค์ระหว่างราชสำนักรัสเซียกับราชสำนักสยามในช่วงสถานการณ์แปรปรวนของการล่าอาณานิคมโดยประเทศมหาอำนาจ โดยศึกษาในบริบทของลัทธิล่าอาณานิคมและจักรวรรดินิยมในช่วงปลายคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 19 ถึงต้นคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 20 ทั้งนี้ วัตถุประสงค์หลักของวิทยานิพนธ์คือการสร้างความเข้าใจที่ดีขึ้นเกี่ยวกับสาเหตุของการเริ่มต้นความสัมพันธ์อันใกล้ชิดระหว่างจักรวรรดิรัสเซียกับราชอาณาจักรสยามในช่วงเวลานั้น และความสำคัญของมิตรภาพระหว่างประเทศทั้งสองในประวัติศาสตร์

ในการนี้ ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยของวิทยานิพนธ์นี้ใช้การวิเคราะห์เอกสารประวัติศาสตร์เป็นหลัก โดยเฉพาะการศึกษาเอกสารประวัติศาสตร์และผลงานวิจัยจากรัสเซียจำนวนมากซึ่งให้ข้อมูลที่มีค่าและความสำคัญที่ทำให้ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับพัฒนาการความสนใจซึ่งกันและกันของทั้งสองประเทศในช่วงเวลานั้นกระจ่างขึ้น

การวิจัยพบว่า แม้ว่า รัสเซียมิได้มีอาณานิคมในเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ แต่จักรวรรดิรัสเซียยังให้ความสนใจกับการมีความสัมพันธ์ที่ดีกับราชอาณาจักรสยาม เนื่องจากวัตถุประสงค์ด้านการเมืองที่ใช้หลักความจริงเป็นพื้นฐาน (realpolitik goals) ของรัสเซีย รวมทั้งการที่รัสเซียไม่ต้องการให้ประเทศคู่แข่ง โดยเฉพาะสหราชอาณาจักรมีอำนาจมากขึ้นในภูมิภาคใดก็ตาม ในขณะเดียวกัน ราชอาณาจักรสยามเองซึ่งได้คำนึงถึงความสัมพันธ์อันใกล้ชิดระหว่างรัสเซียกับฝรั่งเศสในช่วงเวลานั้น เห็นว่า การผูกสัมพันธภาพส่วนพระองค์กับราชสำนักรัสเซีย และการพึ่งนโยบายตะวันออกของจักรพรรดิรัสเซียสามารถช่วยสยามได้ในการต่อต้านการล่าอาณานิคมของทั้งสหราชอาณาจักรและฝรั่งเศส ทั้งนี้ วิทยานิพนธ์นี้วิเคราะห์นโยบายการทูตของรัสเซียต่อราชอาณาจักรสยามรวมทั้งบทบาทส่วนพระองค์ของจักรพรรดิรัสเซียองค์สุดท้ายในการช่วยเหลือสยามให้รักษาเอกราชไว้ได้ โดยผลสรุปของวิทยานิพนธ์คือ หนึ่งในปัจจัยที่เกื้อหนุนให้สยามรักษาเอกราชได้ในห้วงเวลาของการล่าอาณานิคมที่ดุเดือดนั้น นอกจากปัจจัยการพัฒนาประเทศให้ทันสมัยและนโยบายการถ่วงดุลประเทศมหาอำนาจที่มีวิสัยทัศน์ของกษัตริย์สยาม คือ การสนับสนุนของจักรวรรดิรัสเซีย ซึ่งตั้งอยู่บนมิตรภาพอันใกล้ชิดระหว่างจักรพรรดินิโคลาสที่ 2 และพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว ซึ่งทั้งสองพระองค์ได้ช่วยให้ความสัมพันธ์ส่วนพระองค์ระหว่างราชสำนักทั้งสองมีอย่างต่อเนื่องจนกระทั่งต้องมาขาดสะบั้นลงจากการปฏิวัติในเดือนตุลาคม ค.ศ. 1917 ในจักรวรรดิรัสเซีย

สาขาวิชา เอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ศึกษา ลายมือชื่อนิสิต .....

ปีการศึกษา 2552 ลายมือชื่ออ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก.....

ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์ร่วม.....

5187661720: MAJOR SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES
KEYWORDS: BILATERAL RELATIONS/ COLONIALISM/ IMPERIALISM/ DIPLOMACY/ AUTHORITY OF STATE/ RUSSIA/ SIAM

EKATERINA VLADIMIROVNA PUGACHEVA: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF PERSONAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL FAMILY AND THE ROYAL COURT OF SIAM IN THE LATE 19TH-EARLY 20TH CENTURIES. THESIS ADVISOR: ROM PHIRAMONTRI, Ph.D., THESIS CO-ADVISOR: PARADORN RANGSIMAPORN, Ph.D., 103 pp.

By examining the historical context of colonialism and imperialism at the end of the 19th- beginning of the 20th century, the thesis aims to distinguish the place and role of personal contacts between the Russian Imperial Family and the Siamese Court in the turbulent circumstances of colonial rivalry over Siam. The major goal of the thesis is to enhance a better understanding of the reasons for the inception of close relationships between the Russian Empire and Siam at that period of time and the significance of this friendship in the history of both states.

In this respect, the thorough documentary analysis applied in the research methodology is greatly enriched by a vast number of Russian scholarly resources and historical documents that provide valuable information and shed more light on the historical realities in which the countries developed mutual interest towards each other.

The research finds that in spite of not having any colonial claims in Southeast Asia, the Russian Empire was still interested in maintaining relationships with the Kingdom of Siam due to Russian realpolitik goals in the world and her desire not to let her rivals, Great Britain in particular, advance further in any region of the globe. At the same time, Siam, having taken into consideration Russia's close alliance with France at that moment, found a key to Russian support in the anti-colonial struggle against both Britain and France through establishing personal contacts with the Russian Imperial family and relying mainly on the "eastern policy" of the Russian Czar. The thesis analyses the active diplomatic work undertaken by the Russian authorities in relation to the Siamese matters and also the personal intervention of the last Czar of Russia in the Siamese struggle for independence. As a result, the thesis argues that among the factors that allowed for Siam to remain independent in the time of aggressive colonial expansion, one should list not only the active modernization of the country and the far-sighted policy of the balance of great powers undertaken by the Siamese monarchs, but also the support of Imperial Russia. The support provided was based mainly on the close friendship between Czar Nicolas II and King Chulalongkorn, who perpetuated personal contacts between the Russian Imperial Family and the Royal Court of Siam until they were broken by the vestigial realities of the Russian Empire which faced the October revolution of 1917.

Field of Studies: Southeast Asian Studies Student's Signature.....

Academic Year: 2009 Advisor's Signature.....

Co-Advisor's Signature.....

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CHAPTER VII Analysis and conclusion

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Rationale

At the state banquet hosted by former Russian President Putin in honor of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit at St. George Hall in the Kremlin Palace on July 5, 2007, Her Majesty said:

"It has been more than a hundred years that the Russian and Thai peoples have enjoyed strong relations and have always assisted and supported each other. The Emperor of Russia and the Thai King cultivated friendly relations so intimate that His Majesty King Chulalongkorn of the Thai Kingdom sent His Sons to the Russian Imperial Court to study in various fields of knowledge. <…>

His Majesty the King and I are both grandchildren of His Majesty King Chulalongkorn. Therefore, I am most delighted that today I have the opportunity to follow in His footsteps on the State Visit to this great country"[1].

The year of 2007 became a year when Russia and Thailand celebrated the 110th anniversary of King Chulalongkorn's visit to the Russian Empire and the following official establishment of diplomatic relations. It was commemorated by a grandiose State Visit of Queen Sirikit to the Russian Federation on behalf of the Royal Court of Thailand. And every little detail of that visit was meant to revive the glamorous atmosphere of the time of King Chulalongkorn and Czar Nicolas II. In the great flare of Queen Sirikit's visit to Russia, Her Majesty became somewhat a "graceful heroine" of the Russian press which was abound in stories and reports of her State Visit and life: "In her looks there is a little of Grace Kelly style, a little of Jacqueline Kennedy's glamour, ethnic colour, traditional costume, but most of all - her own style. <…> She is the first lady of her country, who was awarded a gold medal by UNESCO, numerous awards by UNICEF. She is the one to fulfill the duties of a regent while the King was adorned as a Buddhist monk. She is the one to launch cultural and ecological projects in her country"[2].

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[1] **Thailand Illustrated Journal**. Vol. 24 No 3. Jul-Sept. 2007. ISSN 0125-0159. [Online]. Available from: http://thailand.prd.go.th/thailand_illustrated/content.php?s_id=301

[2] Пылева А. Несколько дней из жизни Королевы. Журнал Санкт-Петербургский Университет. ISSN 1681-1941/No 13(3761) . 30 сент. 2007 // Pyleva, A. A few days of the Queen's life. In **Journal of St Petersburg University**. ISSN 1681-1941/No 13(3761). 30 Sept. 2007 [Online]. Available from: http://journal.spbu.ru/2007/13/13.shtml

The strong image and strong personality of the Thai Royal figure amazed the Russian public again. In fact, more than a century ago, similar to Queen Sirikit's visit, King Chulalongkorn's trip to Russia prompted sincere and widespread interest in Siam and Siamese affairs among the Russian public. Russian papers wrote about his personality: "In his person we are greeting not only one of the greatest men of our time, <…>, but also a true friend of Russia"[3]. It was this friendship between the ruling monarchs of the Russian Empire and the Siamese kingdom at the end of the XIX-beginning of the XX centuries, which laid a foundation for the future development of relations between the two countries. Thus, it is very noteworthy that today both Thailand and Russia commemorate and cherish that experience and take it as an example of friendship building between the countries now.

Thus, Queen Sirikit's visit drew a link between the past and present of Thai-Russian relations, and revived the interest in what had happened more than a century ago between King Chulalongkorn and Czar Nicolas II and how significant it had been for both states. It is interesting though, that in spite of random remarks about the personal contacts between the Russian Imperial Family and the Siamese Court in different Thai and Russian resources, none of the resources seem to provide reasoning for the initiation of these contacts or give detailed analysis of their role in the history of both countries. Therefore, the topic of my thesis work seems to comply with recent public demand for more detailed information on the initiation of Thai-Russian relations and their place in the history of both states. It also gives an opportunity to present an official view of Russian scholars on this subject to the Thai audience, since I, as a former student of St Petersburg State University, have the possibility to access vast Russian library funds and collect materials on this subject.

Moreover, I believe it is impossible not to look at the initiation of bilateral Thai-Russian relations and their role in the history of the XIX-XX centuries within a framework of the concept of colonialism and imperialism in the Southeast Asian region as a whole. Since in my work I try to investigate the place and role of contacts between Siam and Imperial Russia in terms of the general

[3] Санкт-Петербургские ведомости, 1897. №168. 23 июня (5 июля) // Vedomosti (News) of St Petersburg, 1897. N 168. June 23 (July 5). *Cited from* Melnichenko, B.N. Russia and Siam (Thailand). In **Russia and the East**. St Petersburg: St Petersburg State University, 2002. P. 444.

geopolitical interests of one of the Great Powers of the XIX-XX centuries – the Russian Empire - in Southeast Asia by drawing links and making comparisons with French and British colonialism in this region, I believe this work can greatly contribute to the knowledge of Southeast Asia and her relationship with Great Powers as a whole.

Background

If we look more than a hundred years back, we might start wondering why Russia and Siam found it necessary to develop a relationship at the end of XIX century while they had no major common goals or interests. At that time, world power was shared unevenly between the states which held colonial empires. At the head, on the top rung of the great powers, was Great Britain, dominating two thirds of Africa, South Asia, the peninsula of Muslim Malay states, Australia and Canada, as well as the key points through which the great maritime routes of world commerce passed: Gibraltar, the Cape, Suez Canal, Singapore and the Falklands, which thus allowed them to dominate access to the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Three other great powers followed close on Great Britain's heels: France, with a recent empire built in West Africa and Southeast Asia, where it was building French Indochina on the remains of Vietnam (Laos and Cambodia); Germany and Russia – continental States, one (Germany) which owned some colonies in Africa and the Pacific; the other (Russia), possessing a huge uninterrupted empire that began in the Ural Mountains and stretched across the forests of Siberia. All had Asian ambitions, but only Great Britain and France seemed able to interfere to any effect in the future of those Asiatic states that had not yet gravitated into the Western orbit: Japan, China and Siam.

Nevertheless, Russia was not letting the region of Southeast Asia out of the Empire's sight as well. Russia's foreign policy concerns in Southeast Asia evolved primarily from predominant strategic and economic interests in China and the Far East. By stabilizing and expanding and securing its Eastern frontiers, opening trade, and establishing a naval port in Vladivostok in 1860, Russia had acquired a substantial foothold in the area by the second half of the XIX century but, in the process, had to maintain that foothold in rivalry with the other major European

imperialist powers and Japan. The establishment of a port in Vladivostok required the maintenance of a sea-route for naval and supply vessels from the Black Sea to Vladivostok, which led to the expansion of Russia's strategic interests in Southeast Asia[4]. As a matter of fact, the first contacts between Russia and Siam are dated back to February 19, 1863 (new style calendar) when two Russian ships from the abovementioned port of Vladivostok "Gaydamak" and "Novik" shored at the Bangkok Port on the Chao Phraya River and received a warm reception from the Thais[5]. Since then, Siam made several attempts to enter into relationships with the Russian Empire for the Kingdom's own reasons.

Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia that has never been colonized. Most Western scholars are of the opinion that the main factors that enabled Siam to remain free were largely her position as a buffer state between French and British interests and her policy of balancing great powers. Siam in the XIX and early XXth centuries was relatively modern and politically and economically stable due to a series of great reforms undertaken by King Mongkut (Rama IV, 1851-1868) and King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1868-1910)[6]. This extraordinary stability allowed the two kings of Thailand to maneuver and steer Siam away from European colonialism. King Mongkut, had already had a hard time dealing with foreign pressure, and it was during King Chulalongkorn's reign that Siam had to walk a fine line. To remain independent, Siam had to cede territories and judicial rights, as well as pay monetary fines.

At the time, Siam's neighbours were struggling against colonialism, but one by one they fell to the force of the West. Japan, having been forced to open up to the outside world, had been through the Meiji Restoration that revived imperial rule against shogunate power. Japan then underwent industrialization under the slogan "Enrich the Country, Strengthen the Military".

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[4] Snow, K.A. Russian Commercial Shipping and Singapore, 1905-1916. In **Journal of Southeast Asian Studies**. Vol. 29, Part 1 (March 1998). By National University of Singapore. P.345.

[5] **Russian-Thai Relations. Historical Background**. [Online]. Available from: http://www.thailand.mid.ru/history.html. The Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Kingdom of Thailand, 2005. [2009, September 5].

[6] Dhiravegin, L. **Siam and Colonialism (1855-1909). An Analysis of Diplomatic Relations**. Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 1967. P. 1.

Imperial China was also struggling to come to terms with the Western powers. Empress Dowager Cixi, who held power between 1861 and 1908, sought to benefit from Western technology after the experience of losing the Opium Wars.

Burma no longer existed as an independent country after the fall of King Thibaw to British rule. He was removed from the throne and Burma was annexed as part of the British Empire. It became a province of India in 1886.

France was securing its foothold in Indochina and Siam became a buffer state between the British and the French[7], who played a significant role in Southeast Asia since XVII-XVII centuries. At that time, King Chulalongkorn recognized the Russian Empire as a strong ally of Siam to counteract the British and French influence in Southeast Asia. He followed the Chinese concept of 'have strong allies but make sure their borders are far away"[8].

Objectives

The time framework of my study will extend from the inception of the first Thai-Russian contacts in 1863 to their interruption by World War I and the Russian Revolution of 1917. This time period can be characterized by vigorous growth of the Great Powers' colonial claims in the region of Southeast Asia. Therefore, looking at the historical context of colonialism and imperialism at the end of the XIX- beginning of the XX century, I would like to distinguish the place and role of personal contacts between the Russian Imperial Family and the Siamese Court in the turbulent circumstances of colonial rivalry over Siam. In order to address the main goal of my thesis I develop the following objectives:

[7] Khanthong, T. **Siam in Europe. Continent marks the visit of King Chulalongkorn**. [Online] Available from: http://www.nationmultimedia.com/2007/10/23/headlines/headlines_30053467.php

[8] **From the History of Thai-Russian Relations**. [Online]. Available from: http://rusconsulphuket.org/thai_russian_relation.html. The Office of Honorary Consul of the Russian Federation in Phuket, Krabi and Phanga, 2004. [2009, September 6].

- to highlight events that served as an impetus towards the development of mutual interest and cooperation between Siam and the Russian Empire

- to compare different perspectives of understanding Siam acquired by the European countries, who first appeared in Siam as early as in XVI-XVII centuries, and by the Russians, who first discovered Thailand only in the middle of XIX century, when this country had already undergone the process of modernization

- to analyze the reasons for the Russian Empire's interest in the Southeast Asian region as a whole and in Siam in particular

- to investigate why a close friendship between King Rama V and Czar Nicolas II developed and what interests it served

- to learn how these personal contacts were perpetuated and became a guarantee of Russia's involvement in the Franco-Siamese dispute

- to elaborate on the role of Imperial Russia in the Siamese struggle for independence

- to find out what other personal links between the Royal Court of Siam and the Russian Imperial Family existed and what role they played in nurturing or ceasing bilateral relationships

- to determine how the realities of the XX century and the collapse of the Russian Empire influenced Thai-Russian relations

- to analyze the role of personalities and personal convictions of the key figures in Thai-Russian relations on the edge of the XIX-XX centuries in steering the course of events.

Hypothesis

I believe that during the times of Franco-British rivalry over Southeast Asia, the Russian Empire, represented by the members of the Russian Imperial Family, did play a certain role in Siam's struggle to remain a buffer state and to maintain her status as an independent state. This fact is often omitted by Western scholars who tend to concentrate on the colonial interests of Western powers in this region (which Russia did not have) and look at the region from the perspective of the level of Western involvement in managing the colonial states' affairs (which Russia never did). I make the assumption that Russia's involvement in the Siamese crisis at the end of the XIX-beginning of the XX centuries

happened mainly due to the strong personal contacts between the Russian Imperial Family and the Royal Court of Siam.

At the same time, an alternative hypothesis of Russia's realpolitik interest in Siam as a centre of Southeast Asia and her interest in the region as a whole should not be underestimated.

Major arguments

In favor of my hypothesis that Russia did play a certain role in the Siamese struggle for independence mainly due to the strong personal connection between the Russian Imperial Family and the Royal Court of Siam, I provide *an argument that before a close friendship between King Rama V and Czar Nicolas II developed Russia was very reluctant to intervene in the Franco-Siamese crisis.* Actually, the development of friendly relations between the two countries was originally initiated by the Kingdom of Siam, which tentatively tried to build warm contacts with the first Russians in Siam whenever possible and was advanced by the farsighted policy of the great King Chulalongkorn who saw that in the future Russia could be helpful for the Kingdom in counterbalancing Great Britain and France. Nevertheless, in my opinion, the Russian Empire was not only reluctant but also at first courteously indifferent to the attempts of Siam, as Siam and Southeast Asia were not of major concern for Russian colonialism. Russia was indeed interested in building contacts with Siam and other countries in the region on a friendly basis but she was also perplexed with the possibility of impeding the process of her drawing closer to France (who saw Siam as a country of her own major interest) which was more important for Imperial Russia at that moment. Therefore, I believe that only with the succession to the throne of Czar Nicolas II in 1894 did Siam acquire some sort of assurance of being able to lean on Russia in the Kingdom's struggle for independence due to his close connections with King Chulalongkorn.

In addition to that, it appeared that Russia had a somewhat dual policy towards Siam at that time: one belonged to the Czar, and the other – to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These policies were not conflicting, as they both were dominated by the Russian sovereign Czar Nicolas II, but at certain times they did

not coincide on Siamese matters, since the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was mostly concerned with the general geopolitical situation of the Empire and her relationships with the West, and the Czar was moved by his own personal feelings and convictions. My *main argument here is that Siam in her anti-colonial struggle was obviously counting on the so-called "Czar's policy"*, a policy of an absolute monarch who was endowed with unlimited power in Russia and who could use this power according to his own will and preference. The essence of this policy is greatly expressed in the letter of instructions that was personally approved by the Czar and received by the future Russian Charge d'Affaires in Siam: "Your conduct in its entirety should bear the imprint of the favourable attention which our august monarch is willing to extend to the person of the Siamese King"[9]. In this context I find it very important to look at the similarities and differences of King Chulalongkorn's and Czar Nicolas' personalities, political views and convictions. This is when I start thinking of the power of strong personalities and strong personal ties that Russia and Siam encountered throughout their relations as a key factor in guiding the course of development of the "strong but fragile" friendship between the two states at the edge of the XIX-XX centuries.

I also argue that the early XX century was the time of flourishing contacts between the Kingdom of Siam and the Russian Empire because they were cherished and valued in a special way by the ruling elites and royal courts of both countries not only due to realpolitik and cultural interests but also due to the realization of many similarities between Russia and Siam in terms of history, political and societal organization of the countries. These contacts were fostered by the members of the Russian Imperial Family and the Siamese Royal Family, mainly Czar Nicolas II and King Chulalongkorn, as they had a good personal relationship and paid special attention to the development of Siamese-Russian relations. Even with the stabilization of the Siamese position in the world and succession to the throne of a young King Rama VI in 1910, the devotion to intensify the contacts between Siam and Russia remained strong. I make an assumption that these contacts had all the prerequisites to grow into a larger

[9] Россия-Сиам. 1863-1917. Документы и материалы. Под ред. Басенко Е.В. М.: МИД, 1997 // Basenko, E. (ed.). **Russia-Siam. 1863-1917. Documents and Materials**. Moscow: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997P. 85. *Cited from* Ostrovenko, E. Russian-Thai Relations: Historical and Cultural Aspects. **Journal of the Siam Society,** Vol. 92, Bangkok: The Siam Society, 2004. P. 120.

scale cultural exchange between the countries if they had not been interrupted by World War I and the Russian Revolution.

The eventful XX century created many obstacles to the further development of Russian-Siamese relations, and the Russian Bolshevik revolution made their continuation impossible as the Russian ruling elite was replaced by revolutionary commoners while the Russian aristocracy and the Imperial family, who were personally bonded with the Siamese elite, were deprived of power.

Keywords

Bilateral relations

Colonialism

Imperialism

Diplomacy

Authority of state

Russia

Conceptual framework

Regarding conceptual tools, this research can be analyzed using International Relations theory which has 3 main schools of thought: realism, liberalism and constructivism. As my analysis looks at both realpolitik/geopolitical rationale of initiating close contacts between Imperial Russia and Siam and also at elite perceptions of the two states then both realism and constructivism are relevant to my research.

As it has already been mentioned the concept of colonialism and imperialism became a pervasive theme in the history of the XIX-XX centuries, and it seems to me that the key to understanding all the events which happened during the eventful period at the turn of the centuries lies in application of colonialism and imperialism concepts in the analysis of those events. Thus, I would like to first review the definition of terms “colonialism” and “imperialism”, find out what constitutes both concepts and apply it to the Siamese anti-colonial struggle and to the Russian phenomenon of Imperialism.

Colonialism and Imperialism

Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. One of the difficulties in defining colonialism is that it is difficult to distinguish it from *imperialism*. Frequently the two concepts are treated as synonyms. Like colonialism, imperialism also involves political and economic control over a dependent territory. Turning to the etymology of the two terms, however, provides some suggestion about how they differ. The term colony comes from the Latin word *colonus*, meaning farmer. This root reminds us that the practice of colonialism usually involved the transfer of population to a new territory, where the new arrivals lived as permanent settlers while maintaining political allegiance to their country of origin. Imperialism, on the other hand, comes from the Latin term *imperium*, meaning to command. Thus, the term imperialism draws attention to the way that one country exercises power over another, whether through settlement, sovereignty, or indirect mechanisms of control.

The legitimacy of colonialism has been a longstanding concern for political and moral philosophers in the Western tradition. At least since the Crusades and the conquest of the Americas, political theorists have struggled with the difficulty of reconciling ideas about justice and natural law with the practice of European sovereignty over non-Western peoples. In the XIX century, the tension between liberal thought and colonial practice became particularly acute, as dominion of Europe over the rest of the world reached its zenith. Ironically, in the same period when most political philosophers began to defend the principles of universalism and equality, the same individuals still defended the legitimacy of colonialism and imperialism. One way of reconciling those apparently opposing principles was the argument known as the *"civilizing mission"* or *"the white man's burden"*, which suggested that a temporary period of political dependence or tutelage was necessary in order for "uncivilized" societies to advance to the point where they

were capable of sustaining liberal institutions and self-government[10]. In fact, the temporary period of political dependence was meant to last a long time.

In case of Southeast Asia, where by the end of the XIX century all the countries, except Siam, were officially colonized by the European Powers – Great Britain and France in particular, the "uncivilized" colonies were ruled either directly or indirectly by colonial powers. *"Direct rule"* means relying on colonial administrators to run the colony, with little reliance on the locals, such as in the case of Burma since their annexation by the British in 1886. Inversely, *"indirect rule"* describes colonial rule that utilizes pre-existing political systems, like in Malaya, which was not changed and ruled in the way Burma was[11]. In either case, though, the Great Power had all the opportunities to intervene in the internal affairs of its colony and govern and exploit it for the purpose of the Great Power's own benefit. That is why Siam, which was trapped between the colonial domains of Great Britain and France and whose independent decision-making was greatly challenged by the European powers, was utterly concerned about at least preserving its official independent status and avoiding being labeled a *"colony"*.

Colonialism began as a descriptive term and subsequently assumed a pejorative connotation. In recent times, most studies of the subject have focused attention on attacking both the idea and its practitioners but have also tended to confuse it with imperialism to such a degree as to blur the lines of distinction between the two. It is necessary to discuss imperialism in the context of colonialism and to make the differences clear. For example, it is possible to be imperialistic without having colonies, but it is not possible to have colonies without being an empire.

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[10] Kohn, M. Colonialism. May 9, 2006. **In Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy**. [Online]. Available from: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/colonialism/

[11] Jing Heng Fong**. Direct and Indirect Rule in Southeast Asia. Definitions and Significance of Colonialist Ruling Methods**. [Online]. Available from: http://seasianhistory.suite101.com/article.cfm/direct_and_indirect_rule_in_southeast_asia. Suite 101, May 7, 2009. [2009, October 23].

The word *"empire"* stems from the Latin *imperium* which means command. This was the meaning of the word before it came to define the realm commanded. Empire can be understood to be an age-old form of government between the subjects and the objects of political power, involving two or more national entities and territorial units in an unequal political relationship. J. Starchey defined empire as "any successful attempt to conquer and subjugate a people with the intention of ruling them for an indefinite period" with the accompanying purpose of exploitation. M. Doyle maintains that empires are "relationships of political control imposed by some political societies over the effective sovereignty of other political societies"[12].

Ariel Cohen writes that the word "imperialism", a highly emotionally charged term, first appeared in XIX century France to denote the ideas of partisans of the one-time Napoleonic Empire, and later became a pejorative for the grandiose pretentions of Napoleon III. In terms of imperialism at the end of the XIX century, it denoted mostly the colonialism of maritime powers, from the Spanish and the Portuguese, to the British and French and other Europeans, to the Japanese and Americans[13]. But it seems that imperialism not only describes colonial, territorial policies, but also economic and/or military policies of the Great Empires. It is believed by some scholars that "the simple way to distinguish colonialism and imperialism is to think of colonialism as practice and imperialism as the idea driving the practice"[14].

Russian Imperialism

In order to understand Imperial Russia's goals in Southeast Asia and the reasons for her involvement in the Siamese crisis and desire to establish personal contacts between Russian and Siamese royalty, *the concept of Russian*

[12] Cohen, A. **Russian Imperialism: Development and Crisis**. Westport: Praegers Publishers, 1996. P. 1

[13] Ibid. P. 1.

[14] Singh, A. **Colonialism, Imperialism.** [Online]. Availbale from: http://www.lehigh.edu/~amsp/eng-11-globalization.htm. Lehigh University, Fall 2001. [2009, December 5].

imperialism, which differs from that of European nations, needs to be reviewed within the conceptual framework.

Czarist Russia is often not even mentioned as one of the great imperialist powers of Europe. If we look at the history, the difference was that British, French, and German imperialists notoriously founded overseas empires, while the Czars, as early as in the XVI century, simply began annexing adjacent lands. Their wars in Europe with Sweden, the Ottoman Empire, and Poland gave the Czars relatively little - but densely populated - territory. The centuries-long exploration of Siberia and incorporation of its indigenous peoples into the Russian nation gave the Czars few new subjects, but an enormous land area stretching all the way to Alaska.

According to one of the geopolitical theories of Halford Mackinder (1861-1947), Russia possessed almost all the territories of what he called the *Heartland*[15], which was crucial in his view for the world geopolitical domination: "Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island controls the world"[16]. But even though the Russian Empire was huge, it was in many ways economically, politically and technologically backward, that is why many West European powers often put an effort to prevent Russian expansion.

By the end of the XIX century, in spite of the difficulties in maintaining order in such a vast Empire, Russia, as an imperialist power, had a lot of pretentions to expand her influence and territory even larger. But one must recognize certain things about Russian imperialism as contrasted to Western imperialism. There is an opinion that Western imperialism was mostly driven by banking elites and had economic exploitation as its primary objective. In my understanding, Russian imperialism was to a large extent driven by national interests and basically had the idea of enlarging the core territory of inner Russia

[15] Mackinder's Heartland (according to his earlier perceptions) was the area ruled by the Russian Empire and then by the Soviet Union, minus the area around Vladivostok

[16] Mackinder, H.J. "The Geographical Pivot of History". In **Democratic Ideals and Reality**. Washington DC: Defense University Press, 1996. P. 175-194.

as its primary objective[17]. With the awakening of Asian powers, the problem of securing Russian Asiatic borders acquired a new dimension, while the territorial claims in the Asian region were intensified by the militarily aggressive Asiatic mission initiated by Czar Nicolas II at the end of the XIX century.

In terms of East Asian countries, Imperial Russia was mostly interested in China, Korea and Japan, as those countries were situated in close proximity to her borders and the newly established Far Eastern port of Vladivostok. In this respect, the region of Southeast Asia was out of reach for the Russian Empire's expansion plans. Nevertheless, Russia could not ignore the temptation and encouragement (of Siam in particular) to play a role in the politics of Southeast Asia which could have repercussions for Russia's position in the Far East. Therefore, it seems to me that even not having any colonial claims in Southeast Asia, Russia was still imperialistic in her dealings with this region.

Literature review

As my thesis work is divided into several chapters, I would like to list the most important sources that are used for the analysis in each chapter.

Since I start my research from the inception of Siamese-Russian relations in the middle of the XIX century, in the first chapter of my paper I try to look at the early process of development of mutual interests between the two countries and distinguish the peculiarities of the Russian discovery of Siam. In this respect, the works by **E.O. Berzin "From the History of Thai-Russian Relations"** and **B.N. Melnichenko "Russia and Siam: the Problems of History on Thai materials"** are quite helpful as they give an insight on the Russian perception of Siam, which differs a lot from that of Europeans. The European approach towards Siam is greatly described in an article by a Portuguese scholar **M. Branco "Portugal and Siam: Two Small States in Time of Change"**, which I make use of in drawing comparisons.

[17] Blunt, M. **Radical Left: Russian and Western Imperialism**. August 29, 2008. [Online]. Available from: http://www.radicalleft.net/blog/_archives/2008/8/29/3858378.html

For the second chapter where I discuss the position of Siam and the Russian Empire in the context of the world economic and political situation at the end of the XIX century, I use works not only on both countries' foreign policies, but also sources on the history of both states. For the analysis of the Siamese position as a buffer state between Great Britain and France I relied mostly on the works by the Thai scholars **L.Dhiravegin "Siam and Colonialism (1855-1909). An Analysis of Diplomatic Relations",** which summarizes all the facts about the Siamese anti-colonial struggle; **T. Khanthong "Siam and Europe. Continent Marks the Visit of King Chulalongkorn**". Both of these works are quite descriptive, but contain only random remarks about the role of Russia in the anti-colonial struggle of Siam without providing any reasoning or argumentation. In this chapter I also made use of the book **"A Short History of Thailand" by Wyatt D**, which proved to be helpful in drawing connections between historical events and theoretical concepts of colonialism and imperialism in Siam. Respectfully, for the discussion of the role of the Russian Empire in the world arena, I used materials on Russian foreign policy, including elaborate works by **R. Donaldson & J. Nogee "The Foreign Policy of Russia. Changing Systems, Enduring Interests"** and **B. Jelavich "A Century of Russian Foreign Policy. 1814-1914**". In terms of Russian policy in Asia, the work by **D.Dallin "The Rise of Russia in Asia"** was also helpful.

I found the book edited by **Ch. Tingsabadg "King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe: Reflections on Significance and Impact",** which contains a number of articles written by Thai scholars on the subject of King Chulalongkorn's policy of balancing powers and creating bonds with European courts, quite helpful for my research on the role of personal contacts between the Russian Imperial Family and the Royal Court of Siam in the anti-colonial struggle of the Kingdom at the end of the XIX century. This work allowed me to acquire a better understanding of the view of Thai scholarship on King's Chulalongkorn's contribution to maintaining an independent status of His state, and also provided some remarks on the role of friendship between King Chulalongkorn and the Russian Czar, which I could use for my further analysis. The works by **H. Kullada "Thai-European Relations at the Beginning of King Chulalongkorn's Reign"** and **P.Watanangura "The Visit of King Chulalongkorn to Europe in 1907:**

Reflecting on Siamese History" also proved to be very helpful in my research since they provided Thai scholarly opinion on events that preceded and followed the first European tour of King Chulalongkorn in 1897.

Since in my research I make an attempt to look at the place and role of personal contacts between the Russian and Siamese royalty from the point of view of both countries, I find it necessary to use the memoirs of the XIX century contemporaries as a great source of knowledge on the perceptions and attitudes of Siam and Russia towards their mutual friendship and partnership. The book **"Premier Voyage en Europe de Roi Chulalongkorn (1897). Correspondance Royale et autres ecrits au cours de son voyage en Europe"** that contains a wonderful collection of King Chualongkorn's correspondence with the Siamese court and European nations was of much help for my analysis of Thai perceptions on the importance of having Imperial Russia as a friend. Equally useful was a work by **W. Tips "Gustave Rolin-Jaequemyns and the Making of Modern Siam. The Diaries and letters of King Chulalongkorn's General Adviser**", which vividly presents the growing concern of a European, who was very close to the Siamese court and saw the course of events from the inside, over the future fate of Siam. It also provides some remarks on his personal understanding of the relationships with Russia. Among the weaknesses of this book I can emphasize the narration style that lacks organization which impedes the process of finding necessary information related to a certain topic of study. As for the discussion of the Russian perceptions of her role in Siamese affairs and her friendship with Siam, I would like to note the dairy of **E. Uchtomskij "Tsarevitch Nicolas of Russia in Siam and Saigon"**, which represents one of the best examples of the in-depth analysis of Russia and her role in Asia made by an outstanding scholar of the XIX century, who happened to be a friend and a tutor of the last Emperor of Russia Nicolas II. Another work that attracted my attention and proved to be very helpful for understanding Russian position and goals in Siam and Southeast Asia was a work by **A. Kalmykow "Memoirs of a Diplomat. Outposts of the Empire, 1893-1917**". In his book, Andrew Kalmykow, who was appointed to hold a post in the first legation of the Russian Empire in Siam, shared his feelings and views about the Russian policy in Siam.

Among the Russian language sources that I use in my thesis, I would like to particularly note **"Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. // The Politics of Capitalist States and the National Liberation Movements in SEA (1871-1917). Documents and Materials",** edited by the acknowledged Russian specialist in Southeast Asian studies **A. Guber**, and **"Россия-Сиам. 1863-1917. Документы и материалы. Под ред. Басенко Е.В. М., 1997 // Russia-Siam. 1863-1917. Documents and Materials", edited by E. Basenko**. Both of these books present a collection of all the correspondence and other documents related to Russian-Siamese relations at the end of the XIX-beginning of the XX centuries, references to which illustrate what kind of personal contacts existed between the two courts and also greatly enrich my analysis. A book **"От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений // From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations", edited by Pakamontri E**, which was published in three languages – Thai, Russian and English – under the supervision of the Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, significantly contributes to my research since it is one of the latest resources used in my work that collects articles by both Thai and Russian specialists in the field of Thai-Russian relations.

As for journals and periodicals, in my work I use an article from the Journal of the Siam Society written by **E. Ostrovenko "Russian-Thai Relations: Historical and Cultural Aspects",** where the author gives an overview of the past and present trends of the development of Thai-Russian friendship. The articles by **K. Snow "The Russian Consulate in Singapore and British Expansion in Southeast Asia (1890-1905)"** and **"Russian Commercial Shipping and Singapore, 1905-1916",** published in the Journal of Southeast Asian studies contributed much for my research since it analyses the Russian geopolitical and economic goals in Southeast Asia.

The book by **E. H u n t e r and N. Chakrabongse "Katya and the Prince of Siam"** can not be omitted in my study, since it covers a large part of Siamese-Russian relations – particularly the story of Prince Chakrabongse' Russian experience and love. It is particularly important for my study because

Prince Chakrabongse was the only member of the Siamese court after King Chulalongkorn himself, who was welcomed into the intimacy of the Russian Czar's family and who had a role to play in the development and cessation of Siamese-Russian relations after the Russian revolution of 1917.

Reviewing the existing literature related to the topic of my study I should note that my work is relatively original in its attempt to trace the significance of personal contacts between the royal elites of Russia and Siam in certain historical context of colonialism and imperialism, which was interrupted by World War I and the Russian Revolution. Most of the existing sources on the initiation of Thai-Russian relations lack reasoning and argumentation for Russia's involvement in Siamese affairs, and my work presents an attempt to fill in this gap of knowledge.

Moreover, in comparison to existing works on the subject of Thai-Russian relations, my research deals not only with certain episodes and aspects in this relations, but aims at analyzing the significance of the course of events that led to the initiation and temporary cessation of all contacts between the two countries.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was applied while conducting this research. Due to the fact that the scope of my study concentrates on the events of the XIX-XX centuries, a thorough documentary research had to be performed in order to make my analysis. This study began with an in-depth review of literature written by experts on Thai-Russian relations and foreign policies of both states. As I had access to both Russian and Thai resources, some of the archive documents and materials, including personal letters and government official's reports, greatly enrich my study. Primary documents consist of studies conducted by experts and also government reports. Secondary documents consist of news and internet articles.

The research not only consists of secondary data analysis but also of primary research including non-structured interviews which made it possible for me to draw comparisons between the pattern of Thai-Russian relations in the past and present.

Primary research was mostly conducted in St Petersburg, Russia, since there I had an opportunity to personally talk with leading experts on Thai-Russian relations from St Petersburg State University, observe and take part in the work of the Royal Thai Consulate in St Petersburg and also become a part of Thai-Russian cultural exchange myself by winning a grant from the Royal Thai Embassy in Moscow. This direct access to the course of current Thai-Russian relations was also helpful in attaining the viewpoints of experts from Russia who are involved in this process on a daily basis.

Significance/Usefulness of research

I believe that this research can shed some light on the facts that served as impetus for the inception of Thai-Russian relations and their importance for both states, and can also open up a Russian viewpoint on this matter to the Thai audience. In this respect I find it significant that this research presents the first attempt in the English language to organize and analyze information on the matter which was scantily recorded in different resources in both Thailand and Russia. This research can help government and non-governmental agencies gain a better understanding of how Thai-Russian relations work and on which principles they are based. Moreover, I believe that the findings of this thesis will be of use for the development of Russian studies courses in Thailand and Thai studies courses in Russia, and also can provide a foundation for further debate and research on this topic.

CHAPTER II
DEVELOPMENT OF MUTUAL INTERESTS AND RELATIONSHIPSBETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES

2.1. The first Russians in Siam and their perspective of the exotic far away country

The first Russian encounter with information on the Kingdom of Siam dates back to the XVIII century, but till the middle of the XIX century all the publications about Siam, that were available for a Russian reader, were either some sort of compilation based on European materials or direct translations from English, German and French. Thus, Russians could only get second hand information about this distant unknown kingdom in which Siam was often presented in a superficial manner. Therefore, I consider it necessary to compare the image of Siam depicted in the works of the first Europeans who came to this land much earlier with that of the first Russians, who made their first personal contacts with Siam as late as in 1863.

2.1.1. Siam in the eyes of Europeans

The European expansion beyond the geographical limits of the continent took place between the XV and XVII centuries, and was initially led by Portugal and Spain. In the mid-XVII century, competition from the French, British and Dutch began to erode the maritime, commercial and military hegemony of the two Iberian states. A century and a half later, both had lost their status as great powers and were overtaken by the emerging industrial nations.

Urban, capitalist, industrialized, mechanized societies, possessing advanced military technology, the European states, conscious of their strength, imposed themselves on the other civilizations, which were predominantly agricultural and artisanal, feudal and closed. Driven by self interest and the quest for national prestige, armed with an apparent belief in the superiority of their own civilization, the Europeans

constructed a vision of the world that justified their perceived right to rule the world. For the Europeans in the second half of the XIX century, the West was synonymous with civilization, and the only civilization capable of scientific thought and spiritual refinement, able to overcome natural forces and achieve progress. This Eurocentrism produced modern imperialism and colonialism, which the Europeans considered a mission that the white man was obliged to undertake in order to elevate, to progress, and to civilize the other peoples on the planet. In the words of the famous British writer Rudyard Kipling, the "white man bore the burden" of teaching the other races the way of peace, dignity and freedom. In other words, the white man had the obligation to colonize[1].

In these circumstances, one of the targets of colonization – Siam – had already acquired a certain image in the eyes of Europeans by the XVI-XVII centuries. This image greatly reflected the realities of contemporary Siam – an agrarian country, feudal in its social structure and Buddhist in terms of religion and culture. European ambassadors, travelers, naval officers, merchants, Christian missionaries, military specialists were regular visitors to the old Siamese capital Sri Ayutthaya, which then was an important centre of international trade. Many of them would spend a long time in Siam selling goods, preaching, serving as guards, being advisors to kings in the area of artillery and shipbuilding, working as doctors and translators. At first they were Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, English and French citizens then followed by the Germans and North Americans. Some of them were authors of vivid and detailed descriptions of Siam and its life: the works by Van Vliet[2] or Pallegois[3] can serve as remarkable examples. But it was not these works that determined the direction of the European thought towards Siam. The majority of the authors, who left some literature sketches of Siam, were inspired by the contemporary idea of a "civilized white man's burden" and tended to stress the incompatibility and difference of the bases for the spiritual development and culture of Europe and Siam: Christianity and Buddhism. A lot of foreigners in Siam at that time were Catholic missionaries, and the prevalence of Christian-missionary attitude towards Siamese civilization was deeply rooted in their

[1] Branco, M. **Portugal and Siam: Two Small States in Times of Change**. Presented at the Conference at Chulalongkorn University. 27.06.2007. P.1.

[2] Van Vliet, J. **Van Vliet's Siam**. Translated by Baker, Ch., and others. (ed.). Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2005.

[3] Pallegoix, J.-B. **Description of the Thai Kingdom or Siam.** Translated by Tipps, W. Bangkok: White Lotus, 1999.

works. This way of looking at Siam not only determined the selection of materials about the country which reached European readers, but also determined its interpretation. Contrasting the European civilization with the "lagging behind" Siamese civilization became a leit-motif or highlight of the way to present the material to the eyes of Europeans[4].

One Portuguese author, Branco M., mentions that dozens of educated travelers who passed through or lived in Siam between 1830 and 1900 already "carried with them this prejudiced vision of the Siamese, considering them "lazy, disorderly and childish" – "it has been well said that the Siamese habit is to work at play, and to play at work" – dominated by a chaotic, corrupt, disorganized and ignorant government. For one especially acerbic North American, "the general appearance of Bangkok is that of a large, primitive village, situated in and mostly concealed by a virgin forest of almost impenetrable density". In parallel, another kind of prejudice flooded the European vision of Siam. We call this "easy thinking" exoticism and orientalism: "the woman is a slave to the man, the enormous harem of the King of Siam" - these ideas filled the Europeans with sensuality and sadness because, as Westerners, they had to make do with just one wife. However, no matter how certain they were in their attitudes towards the Siamese, they did not know what the Siamese thought of the Europeans. In the famous chronicle "Our Wars with the Burmese: Thai-Burmese Conflict 1539-1767", the father of modern Siamese historiography Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, comparing the Portuguese with the Dutch and British, said that the Portuguese were obsessed with imposing Catholicism on other peoples, for which reason the Asians were always afraid whenever they had dealings with them"[5]. The Portuguese were not the only ones who tried to convert the Siamese into some form of Christianity and save them from "barbarian" Buddhism. Often the Siamese people saw Europeans as imposers of a strange unfamiliar religion, thus rejecting Christianity and limiting the spread of European culture, especially at the end of the XVII century, when Siam almost isolated herself from foreign invasion. Even after the opening up and modernization reforms of

[4] Мельниченко Б.Н. Россия и Сиам: проблемы истории на материале Тайской истории. Ч.1. Проект "Звуковая энциклопедия". http://www.sonoteka.spb.ru / Melnichenko, B.N. Russia and Siam: the Problems of History on Thai materials. Part 1. **Project "Sound Encyclopedia"**. [Online]. Available fom: http://www.sonoteka.spb.ru

[5] Branco, M. Op. cit. P.2.

King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn, the European attitude was hard to change as it was formed by centuries and still followed a certain pattern. For example, the view of the senior official at Britain's Foreign Office about "the feudal chieftains" who surrounded King Chulalongkorn was not complimentary: "The Siamese Government and Administration are, and always have been, very bad, corrupt, oppressive, and inefficient. Some while ago they were seized with a reforming mania, made great professions, and invited European assistance in introducing new institutions on Western principles. A certain varnish was put on, but the inside remained as it had been"[6].

2.1.2. The Russian discovery of Siam

The first Russians who came to Siam in the middle of the XIX century discovered a completely different country than the first Europeans in the XVI-XVII centuries. Siam has been already modernized by the two monarchs King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn, who put a lot of effort in negotiating the image of their country in the world arena. Although Siam had preserved cultural peculiarities and traditions, it had no longer been a "lagging behind" country in terms of social and political organization. This was Siam as first seen by the Russians. And the effects of Siam's reformation lie in the basis of understanding this country by the Russians. Moreover, as already said, Russia did not have any expansionist plans into Southeast Asia nor did it have plans for setting up the Orthodox Church mission there. Thus, the perspective and the goals of the first Russians in Siam differed drastically from that of the Europeans, influencing the overall image of Siam presented to the Russian audience. In addition to that, we should remember that the Russian empire has always been a multiethnic country, which incorporated in herself a lot of cultures and religions, including Buddhism that was practiced by the indigenous peoples of Siberia, thus creating a sense of religious tolerance that was not typical of the other European countries.

In the middle of the XIX century the great interest in Thailand that was aroused in Russia after the position of the Kingdom in the world arena became a topical issue for all the European countries, resulted in the publication of a number of books about this distant and little-known land. As already mentioned, the first direct contact between

[6] Minutes by Sir T. Sanderson, 17 Aug. 1894 in BDOFA, Vol. 27 doc. 30 // cited from Tingsabadh, Ch. (ed.) **King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe: Reflections on Significance and Impacts**. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2000. P.14.

Siam and Russia took place in 1863. With the foundation of Vladivostok city on her Eastern border, the Empire was expanding her presence in the basin of the Pacific ocean through the creation of the Pacific Russian Fleet squadron. Thus, Russian vessels that belonged to the squadron started visiting Siam in the XIX century. The first Russian naval men who visited Siam were 334 officers and sailors of two warships – clipper "Gaidamak" under Lieutenant–Commander A. Peschurov and the corvette "Novik" under Lieutenant-Commander Skryplev. The two ships entered the waters of the Menam Chao Praya river in February 1863. Although this visit of Russian ships was unexpected for the Thai government, the latter did everything to accord them a worthy, friendly reception. At the end of the visit, King Rama IV Mongkut gave A. Peschurov an envelope with his visiting cards for presentation to the Russian government. In his account of the visit, Captain Peschurov highly assessed Thailand's achievements which at that time, under the leadership of King Mongkut, had embarked on the road of technical and social progress. It is believed that this first visit laid a foundation for the development of Siamese-Russian friendship in the future.

In the following decades, Bangkok was often visited by Russian vessels: in February-March 1874 by the corvette "Askold" under the captainship of rear-admiral F. Brumer – a commander of the Russian Pacific Squadron. This time too, the Russians were given a cordial reception. A large house served by the staff of the royal court was placed at their disposal. To enable the guests to inspect the sights of the capital they were given a large number of palace vehicles and boats with royal oarsmen. Special officials of the Foreign Ministry were assigned as interpreters and guides to the admiral and his officers. The Russian guests were then invited to the reception at the royal palace which was arranged with great pomp. Following the official introductions, King Rama V made a speech voicing the hope that Siam and Russia would always and invariably maintain friendly relations and before long would sign a treaty for further strengthening their friendly ties. Rear-admiral Brumer also had a talk with the Uparat, the "second king". The Russian officers replied the questions of the Uparat about Russia, her climate and customs, the navy and navigation. The "second king", in turn, showed the Russian naval officers maps of Siam he had drafted personally. Shortly afterwards, King Chulalongkorn gave the Russian guests a second, private audience, where he recalled the first visit of Russian ships when he was still a child. After a week's stay in Bangkok the guests set out on the return journey.

Progressive Russians, especially scientists, had long striven to establish direct contact with peoples of Southeast Asia. Outstanding among them for his deep knowledge and advanced ideas was the Russian traveler N.N. Miklukho-Maklai, who was the first European to visit the mountain districts of the Malacca peninsular. He gave the first descriptions of the Orang Sakai and Orang Semang tribes based on his personal observations. He was also granted a letter from the government instructing local officials to render every assistance to the Russian traveler. During his second trip Miklukho-Maklai made many valuable observations of Thai architecture and handicrafts[7].

Moreover, the naval officers, for example those who came in 1874 with the corvette "Askold", were also highly encouraged to publish their notes about the city of Bangkok in order to fill the gap of knowledge about the exotic country among Russians. Their works became the first components of the Siamese image that the Russian elite were fond of. They reflected a sincere interest of the Russian visitors in this unknown country. They were mostly descriptive and avoided making any cmparisons. Although, sometimes, the thrilling images of Siam evoked the Middle Eastern stories, of which the Russian officers were more aware of. Maximov A., the captain of corvette "Askold", in his memoirs wrote: "It seemed to us that we saw some fairytale city from the story of "One thousand and one nights"… The architecture of the palace was so fanciful that it came to the mind that you see a building from some magic world in front of your eyes"[8].

In the spring of 1882 the Thai people were celebrating a memorable anniversary of their history – the centenary of the rule of the Chakri dynasty and the centenary of the founding of Bangkok. As a token of friendship for the Thai people and their government, Russia decided to send a squadron of ships on a friendship visit to the centenary celebrations. It was headed by rear-admiral A.Aslambekov, a noted Russian naval commander, who assigned for the visit to Thailand the finest vessels of his squadron – the flagship cruiser "Africa" and the cruiser "Asia". Upon arrival, the guests were received by the Foreign Minister Prince Dewawongse. After a conversation with

[7] Berzin, E.O. **From the History of Russian-Thai Relations**. Moscow: Nauka, 1970. P.1-3.

[8]. Максимов А.Я. Вокруг света. Плавание корвета «Аскольд». СПб.: .:«Санкт-Петербург», 1994. / Maksimov, A.Y. **Around the World. The voyage of corvette "Askold".** St Petersburg: «St Petersburg» Publishing, 1994. P. 464-465.

the Prince they were invited to an audience with King Chulalongkorn, where His Majesty once again outlined the intensions of Siam to conclude a trading treaty with Russia. In concluding the conversation, the King asked the Russian guests to accept medals in honour of the centenary and presented them personally to the officers.

Another interesting episode from the history of Russian-Thai ties dates back to the 1880s. In 1888, P. Shchurovskiy, a Russian composer, wrote the music for the Thai national anthem. In appreciation, King Chulalongkorn presented him with a silver snuffbox engraved with his name.

In March of 1891, Siam was visited by the frigates “Pamyat Azova”, “Vladimir Monamach” and “Admiral Nakhimov”, and in July of the same year – by the canon ship “Sivuch”, whose Captain A. Plaksin was commissioned to present King Chulalongkorn with the highest Russian decoration, the diamond-studded Order of St. Andrey Pervozvanniy and a greeting letter from the Emperor Alexander III. Later on, in May 1900, the Kingdom was visited by another canon ship “Gilyak” and in October 1911 – by the “Aurora” cruiser[9].

In spite of the fact that Russia was satisfied with the results of the first visits to Siam in the second half of the XIX century, the Russian government still did not see it necessary to establish formal relations with the Kingdom in order not to aggravate Great Britain and France, major European powers who were in a state of rivalry over control of the Siamese. Therefore, the Russian government was initially cautious to reciprocate the reports brought by A. Peschurov, F. Brumer and A. Aslambegov about the Siamese desire to further strengthen friendly ties by signing any documents of bilateral trade, diplomatic and cultural cooperation.

In November 1891, Russia was visited by the first Thai statesman - Prince Damrong, brother and close aide of King Chulalongkorn, and an outstanding statesman and scholar, who at that time held the post of Minister of Education and Public Health in the Thai government. One of the reasons that prompted him to make a tour of European countries in 1891 was the desire to study the achievements of different countries in the sphere of education so as to utilize them for improving the educational

[9] Melnichenko, B.N. Op. cit. Available from: http://www.sonoteka.spb.ru

system in his own country. Another no less important mission was of a diplomatic nature, namely, to strengthen the international prestige of Thailand, which at that time was struggling to remain the only independent state in Southeast Asia. The visit of Prince Damrong to Russia demonstrated to the world Russia's friendly feelings for Thailand, but Czar Alexander III, who gave Prince Damrong a hospitable greeting and audience in Crimea (now the territory of Ukraine), was evasive about any possibilities of concluding a treaty between the two countries which were brought up in the conversation by Prince Damrong, as at that point Russia and France were already in the process of ratifying the terms of their alliance and Russia did not want to complicate the process. Nevertheless, a cordial ceremonial reception was held in the evening of November 15, 1891 in the Levadia palace, Sevastopol – the summer residence of the Russian czars on the southern coast of Crimea, where Prince Damrong presented Emperor Alexander III with the highest Thai order, Maha Chakri, and a letter form King Chulalongkorn.

The Russian press commented extensively on the visit of Prince Damrong. Progressive circles noted with great satisfaction the extensive reforms in the economic, social and cultural spheres carried out by the government of King Chulalongkorn – the abolition of slavery, vigorous development of trade, industry and means of communications and the improvement of the administration system[10].

We can conclude from the above that, although the Russian government had yet to develop an interest in the Kingdom of Siam as a partner country through personal relations of the countries' leaders, the Russian audience of that time had already been inspired by the images of Siam and was craving for information about this distant country that was seen as a buffer zone in Southeast Asia. I would also like to emphasize that the first Russians in Siam of mid-XIX century saw a different country than that of the other Europeans: they saw process of change, development and modernization led by an outstanding person without any tints of stagnation or underdevelopment. And this quaint yet powerful image brought a certain sense of equality in the further relations of the two countries.

[10] Berzin, E.O. Op. cit. P. 6-7.

CHAPTER III

THE KINGDOM OF SIAM AND THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SITUATION AT THE END OF THE XIX CENTURY

3.1. Siam-France-Great Britain – a triangle of opposing interests in Southeast Asia

Towards the end of the XIX century, Great Britain and France conquered and had influence in much of Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Far East. In Southeast Asia in the 1880s France became a great rival of Great Britain when the latter expanded into Burma (after several English-Burmese wars Great Britain declared the annexation of the whole of Burma in 1886) and France advanced into Cambodia, Cochin-China and Tongkin (in 1867 Siam lost her rights over Cambodia, except from Battambang and Seam Reap, and in 1883 Vietnam became a protectorate of France). The geographic position of Siam thus became significant towards the end of the XIX century as the Kingdom was awkwardly placed between Great Britain with her Malayan protectorates to the West and France with her colony to the East. When the British tried to move eastwards from Burma and Northward from Malaya and when France tried to move westwards from Vietnam, Siam, whose position was in between, became a buffer area.

The French and the British, due to their colonial expansion, had come to a clash of interests in Siam. It was estimated that Great Britain had 20,000 citizens residing in or frequenting Siam in 1899. Her nationals held key posts in the Siamese bureaucracy and she enjoyed, on the whole, good relations with the King and the court. Although the economic stake in Siam was of no real consequence to the British people, business and commercial men realized that the development of the country's resources signified an enlarging market and opportunities for profitable enterprise and investment. To the firms and individuals directly concerned and to the British authorities of the Indian Empire and British Malaya, the future of Siam was a matter of considerable importance.

If the French should annex the Kingdom, they would probably establish tariffs and other discriminatory measures injurious to British enterprise[1].

As for France, it was less well placed in Siam, but her officials in Indochina, under the influence of the Parti Colonial, pursued a forward policy which (to the British in the 1890's) seemed to be one of "constantly aggressive action"[2]. The French were in particular interested in the Mekong Valley, partly because the river could provide the highway for trade, and partly because that region was needed to consolidate France's empire in Indochina. It is believed, that the French colonials and such statesmen as Jules Ferry, Foreign Minister in 1884, even hoped to incorporate all of Siam into the French empire.

As also mentioned by Likhit Dhiravegin, another significant point was the desire of both the British and the French to try to reach Yunnan which was believed to possess vast mineral resources and to have great possibilities for the development of trade. Because of its proximity, Siam assumed a peculiar importance in the minds of Europeans. Finding that the Red River in Tongkin was not a satisfactory waterway to Yunnan, the French turned their attention to the Mekong and to the land route extending northward from Luang Prabang. The British too cherished the idea of establishing a trade route to Yunnan, although it was hard to develop it from Upper Burma. After the success of the Suez Canal the French were also particularly interested in the Kra Canal that would improve the communications with their growing empire in Indochina. But this project, according to Likhit Dhiravegin, was distasteful to Britain – for it would be detrimental to Singapore. Great Britain thus regarded Siam as being a necessary buffer state between her Indian empire and the French possessions[3].

Never fully disengaged from their belief in the economic value of the Mekong valley and increasingly determined to match the growth of the British Empire with one of their own in Indochina, the French watched the increase of Siamese activity to strengthen her administrative control over her eastern districts in Laos, that occurred at the end of the XIX century and was discreetly encouraged by the British, with growing

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[1] Dhiravegin, L. **Siam and Colonialism (1855-1901): an Analysis of Diplomatic Relations**. Bangkok: Thai Wattana Panich, 1975. P. 46.

[2] Tingsabadh, Ch. (ed). **King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe: Reflections on Significance and Impacts**. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2000. P. 14.

[3] Dhiravegin, L. Op. cit. P. 45-48.

alarm. Since 1883, the Siamese as the suzerains of the Kingdoms of Luang Prabang and Siang Khwang in Laos, sent military expeditions there to respond to the Ho incursions, and France in 1886 decided to get involved in that game as well. The ensuing dispute with France over the frontier between Vietnam and Siamese Laos quickly exploded into a French challenge to Siamese suzerainty over all Laos. The challenge was made in spite of the fact that a Franco-Siamese agreement of 1886, sanctioning the creation of a French vice-consulate headed by Auguste Pavie in Luang Prabang, explicitly recognized the validity of Siamese suzerainty, and even sovereignty, over that area[4].

At the same time, in 1890 Britain annexed the Shan state of Kentung that was situated on the left side of the Mekong river, where France wanted to claim control of. Thus by 1892 the matter of separating the spheres of control in the Mekong valley between the two empires had become almost a critical issue. Another question was brought up – what had to be done with the Siamese territories in Laos? What had to be done to the yet "uncivilized" country of Siam? France was quite aggressive in her responses, as will be discussed later, and Siam could only hope that Britain, with her more "lenient policy"[5] would somehow support Siam in this matter. But when Britain did not prove to be willing to take serious actions in this conflict in order to avoid an open war, King Chulalongkorn, who demonstrated a true talent for diplomacy, in his strategy of "balance of power" had to seek for another party – a powerful country – to lean on in protecting his Kingdom and for it to become a mediator in the conflict. He also had to seek for a way to modernize the country in order to make it a stronger player in the fight to remain independent. His modernization touched all spheres of Siamese life – from abolishing slavery to introduction of the institution of private property, from the reformation and unification of the administration system to the strengthening of the military, from educational reform to introducing European technology in order to boost industry and infrastructure.

What becomes clear in an analysis of the XIX century conflicts between Europeans and other civilizations is that while some cultures learned how to lessen the shock effect, adapting, getting to know the enemy and surviving, others were unable to do so, and died. In other words, those who understood the extent of the danger and

[4] Wyatt, D.K. **Thailand. A Short History**. New Haven&London: Yale University Press, 1984. P.202.

[5] Tingsabadh, Ch. Op. cit. P. 14.

acquired sufficient knowledge of the danger to limit the damage, succeeded in surviving. For their part, those who took refuge in traditional responses and refused to learn about or from the European intruder, quite simply succumbed. King Chulalongkorn came to the throne in the midst of this profound political change in the region. The process of Siamese adaptation to the West led obligatorily to complex conceptual changes in the notions of state, society and man. Siam went through many decades of seeking a compromise between its roots and the need to enter into contemporaneity. "It was obvious, to any observer with the slightest level of awareness, that Siam could not imitate either the British or the French systems, what King Chulalongkorn did do was to find the system of European government that best fitted the characteristics of his own country, thus ensuring full foreign recognition of the Siamese State"[6].

In 1872, at the invitation of Viceroy Lord Mayo, King Rama V visited India under the British Raj, and in 1896 spent three months touring Singapore and Batavia, capital of the Dutch East Indies. But in addition to King Rama V's acquaintance with the governor-generals of the European colonies, the only major European figure with whom he had a personal friendship by that time was the Czarevitch Nicholas Romanov, future emperor of Russia, who visited Siam in 1891. The Russian empire was an autocracy, since all power rested in the Emperor, aided by counselors, and no other power existed outside the figure of the sovereign: protector of the orthodox Christian faith, upholder of justice, legislator, supreme commander of the army. Nicholas's grandfather, Alexander II, had used this immense power to implant great social and economic reforms: he freed the serfs in 1861, began the industrialization of the empire, reformed the army, education, and justice systems, and promoted nationalism and the cult of the figure of the emperor. At the same time, he contracted thousands of German technicians, raised capital from British and French investors, imported cutting-edge technology and started to modernize the Russian economy. In this context, some scholars believe that King Rama V took the Russian way as his model for modernization[7]. The need for modernization and "the threat of imperialism made it imperative that the King visit Europe" twice, with the objective not only to stage a new form of diplomacy in order to negotiate the status of his country but also "to look into the sources of wealth of all the

[6] Branco, M. Op. cit. P. 7.
[7] Ibid. P. 7-9.

European countries"[8] and apply some of the knowledge in the reforms, that enabled the Kingdom to resist colonial pressure and remain an independent state.

In an effort to balance colonial power of European countries, Siam also took interest in Germany that started to actively participate in the implementation of King Chulalongkorn's modernization scheme. But the world was still several years apart from the rise of strong, ambitious and influential Germany, and "if the Siamese elite had ever expected unconditional and effective German support for the independence and sovereignty of their country, such lofty expectations were disappointed. {…} In the sphere of realpolitik the "German card" was not a real option to ward off French territorial ambitions. British "protection" still continued to offer an alternative – though this "protection" was two-edged as it afforded territorial and other concessions"[9]. In these circumstances, Siam, trying to find a friendly powerful protector in Europe, had to turn to Russia as one of the Great Powers of that time. Moreover, having received a warm reception from the Russian court during Prince Damrong's visit in 1891, the Siamese had grounds to believe that Russia did pay attention to the situation in Southeast Asia and a distinguished position of Siam, and also to hope that Russia will be able to influence the political situation in Siam through joining forces with the French and, at least, ousting out the British, who had acquired all of Burma by that time. In fact, since Prince Damrong's visit to Russia Great Britain started paying much more attention to the course of development of relations between the Kingdom and the Russian Empire. It was even rumoured in Great Britain that the Russian consul in Singapore tried to negotiate with Bangkok about the right for Russia to explore fuel in the Siamese territories of Phuket. And even though, according to the rumours, he did not succeed, Britain believed that Russia will keep trying to establish herself somewhere

[8] Kullada, H. **Thai-European Relations at the Beginning of King Chulalongkorn Reign**. Presented at the Conference "The Centenary of King Chualongkorn's Visit to Europe in 1897". Bangkok. 1997. P. 2.

[9] Grabowsky, V. Thai-German Relations from King Chulalongkorn's First Visit to Europe Until World War I. P. 61. In Pornsan Watanangura (ed.). **The Visit of King Chulalongkorn to Europe in 1907: Reflecting on Siamese History**. Bangkok: Center for European Studies. Chulalongkorn UNiversity, 2008. P. 61.

in Southeast Asia to compete with Great Britain. This kind of British anxiety was of benefit for the Siamese concept of a balance of power[10].

3.2. Russian Empire's foreign relations

In order to analyze the position of the Russian Empire that was one of the Great Powers of the XIX century, we should look at her incentives to draw close or to stand in opposition to certain countries or blocs. Moreover, Russian politics in Asia to some extent reflected her relations with European countries; therefore, knowing on what terms Russia conducted her affairs with main European states becomes a clue to understanding her policy toward Asia and Southeast Asia in particular.

3.2.1. Russia and Europe

By the end of the XIX century the Russian Empire had undergone significant reforms, mentioned previously, that were aimed at internal development in order to eliminate the weaknesses of Russia's stagnation in economy and political organization so sharply revealed in comparison to other Western powers by Russian defeat in the Crimean War of 1853-1856. After this war, major goals of Russian foreign policy were that of recovering territorial losses it had suffered, reestablishing itself in the Black Sea and supporting the political movements attempting to free Balkan nations from the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, later on in 1878-79 Russia launched another war against Turkey to regain power and free Orthodox Christian nations in the Balkans from Ottoman rule following the slogan of Pan-Slavism.

In this regard, Russian interests conflicted with that of Great Britain, which, besides having disputes with Russia in Afghanistan, opposed the expansion of Russian influence in the Balkans thus intervening in the Turkish-Russian peace talks in San-Stefano along with other European nations. The Treaty of San-Stefano, by which the

[10] วิมลพรรณ ปีตธวัชชัย. **สมเด็จพระเจ้าบรมวงศ์เธอ กรมพระยาเทวะวงศ์วโรปการ. ความสำพันธ์ระหว่างไทยกับรัสเซีย.** กรุงเทพ: โรงพิมพ์กรุงเทพ (1984), 2547. หน้า. 418-423.

Ottoman Empire would recognize the independence of Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, and the autonomy of Bulgaria, was distinctly not to the liking of most of the other Great Powers, and they proceeded to call an international meeting to force Russia to modify its terms. With German Chancellor Bismarck as the "honest broker", the Congress of Berlin (June 1878) left Russian Pan-Slavists furious (especially at Germany and Austria for not backing her) and left the national aspirations of Serbia and Bulgaria unfulfilled.

As for a new and fast-growing German Empire, aware that a frustrated and isolated Russia could go looking for allies among Germany's enemies, Bismarck devised a plan whereby Russia could achieve some of her security objectives in the Black sea in return for alignment with the German powers. Germany and Austria had formed an alliance in 1879, and Bismarck proceeded to revive the idea of the Three Emperor's League, that was formed by the treaty with Russia in 1881 and followed the old bonds of conservative ideology. Nevertheless, the former community of the three northern courts was not what it had once been, since the number of issues on which they could render each other assistance had sharply diminished and the interests of Russia and Austria-Hungary in the Balkans tended to clash.

Determined to keep Russia away from France, Bismarck devised a secret treaty ("the Reinsurance treaty" of 1887) in which the two empires promised each other neutrality if either became involved in a war with a third power, with the exception of an aggressive war of Germany against France and of Russia against Austria. The Reinsurance treaty came up for renewal in 1890, in the wake of Bismarck's dismissal as chancellor, and the young Kaiser Wilhelm II was persuaded by his new advisor to allow it to lapse. This proved a fatal mistake, as it virtually drove the Russians into the arms of the French, setting the stage for the transformation of the European system into a rigid bipolarity of opposing coalitions[11].

The policy of cultivating the potential "intimacy" with France started to be implemented by Czar Alexander III (1881-1894), whose reign lasted a short period of time, but constituted the most significant period of the century in regard to czarist

[11] Donaldson, R., and Nogee J. **The Foreign Policy of Russia. Changing Systems, Enduring Interests**. New York: Mr. Sharp Inc, 2002. P. 27-28.

diplomacy. He also inherited the aforementioned policies of opposition to Great Britain and cautious friendship with Germany from his predecessor Alexander II.

The formation of a Franco-Russian alliance had long been supported by nationalists in both France and Russia. However, many considerations still hindered its accomplishment. The key link between the states remained the fact that both states became diplomatically isolated by the turn of the century, and faced the danger of seeing their policies, whether offensive or defensive in intention, blocked by the combination of the Triple Alliance (formed in 1882 by Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy) and Britain. France and Russia thus had the same potential enemies, but they did not have similar immediate aims and interests in foreign policy. Russian interests were still primarily concentrated in the Balkans, where the chief opponents were Austria-Hungary and Britain. Russia had no quarrels with Germany nor did she wish to antagonize the military giant. France, in contrast, had no important Balkan goals; she was thus unlikely to lend active or enthusiastic assistance to Russian projects in the East. French policy remained in this period divided in that the government sought to carry on an active continental policy against Germany, and also a colonial program against Great Britain. The strong nationalists prepared for a war of revenge with Germany and to regain the territories of Alsace-Loraine, annexed by Germany after the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), the moderates feared that Germany would launch a preventive war for the purpose of eliminating French power once and for all. The chief aim of the negotiations with Russia in French eyes was thus to obtain the support of the Russian armies against Germany's eastern frontiers in time of war. The Russian government naturally had no great enthusiasm about fighting Germany for French aims on the Rhine when no outstanding issues appeared between St Petersburg and Berlin.

Certainly, the ideological issues of the century also continued to hinder closer relations between the two countries. The Third Republic and Czarist Russia stood poles apart. Despite her value as an ally, France remained for the conservative Russia the center of revolutionary movements and the patron of Polish nationalism. But if the immediate issues were put aside and only general long-range questions were considered, then Germany too was the principal enemy of Russia. The Russian Pan-Slav, foreseeing an inevitable clash between Slavs and Teutons, realized that a French alliance was necessary to secure the realization of his dream of a great Slavic empire;

whereas French nationalists, bent on a policy of revanche, saw that France could only regain the role of the greatest nation on the continent with the destruction of Germany, a project feasible only with Russian cooperation[12]. Moreover, France offered loans to Russia, thus tying up the two states economically (By 1914 $2.000.000.000 in French money was in Russian hands[13]). We can thus say, that Russia came to be economically dependant on France, while France, apart from seeing her as a market for investment, saw the vast Russian Empire and her influence in Europe as a sort of guarantee of protection and used the money market to ensure Russian support for her policies.

Therefore, the initial Franco-Russian convention in August 1891 was only a vague agreement that the two states will discuss measures to be taken if peace was endangered or if either were threatened. The actual formalization of a highly secret military convention occurred only at the end of 1893. It provided that if France were attacked by Germany or by Italy supported by Germany, Russia would employ all available forces against Germany; if Russia were attacked by Germany or Austria supported by Germany, France would do the same[14].

The successor of Alexander III, Nicolas II (1894-1917), inherited from his father the French alliance, of whose existence he learnt only after his accession. During the first years of his reign, which were not yet interrupted by the turmoil of revolutions and war, he not only maintained, but even tightened the bonds of agreement. In 1896 he travelled to France, in 1897 the French president Faure returned the visit. In 1899 the alliance was strengthened through the provisions that the military agreement should be extended to cover the “maintenance of equilibrium”. The existence of alliance, however, in no way hindered Nicolas from considering and discussing agreements with Germany and Austria-Hungary. Like previous Czars, Nicolas II felt a strong sense of dynastic kinship with the court of Berlin, despite the dislike for William II, who was actually his cousin. In his meetings with the German Emperor, Nicolas II showed himself personally willing to accept a policy of cooperation, even when such an agreement would have meant a violation of the French treaty.

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[12] Jelavich, B**. A Century of Russia Foreign Policy. 1814-1914**. Philadelphia&New York: Wilson Center Press, 1964. P. 213-215.

[13] Ibid. P. 233.

[14] Donaldson ,R., and Nogee J. Op. cit. P. 28.

3.2.2. Russia and Asia

By the end of the XIX century Russia was pursuing an even more active foreign policy in the Far East, motivated initially by interests of strengthening political and economic control over her territorial possessions in Siberia and the Far East, promoting trade and maritime connection from the Arctic Ocean to the Pacific and by the desire for national prestige. Later on Russia expressed foolhardy imperialist designs on Korea. During the 1890s, under the guidance of the dynamic Minister of Finance Sergei Witte, the Russian government had undertaken a policy of intensive industrialization spurred on by the construction of a Trans-Siberian Railway[15]. Witte propelled Russia's expansion eastward with his vision of the economic or "peaceful penetration" of Manchuria and Mongolia via the railway[16]. Later, however, Witte's policy was replaced by the more military aggressive Asiatic mission of Czar Nicolas II under the influence of the Minister of Interior V.Plehve. This policy inspired the occupation of the Liaotung peninsular in 1898 and the establishment of a naval base at Port Arthur. Nicolas II had paid special attention to the Far East since his youth, by visiting many Oriental countries, including Siam, as the heir to the throne. "He visited Japan and Vladivostok, had travelled across Siberia. He was also the official head of the Trans-Siberian Railway Committee. At the time of the coronation festivities of 1896, the Chinese Chancellor appeared in Moscow to sign a treaty extending Russian influence far into Northern China, while an envoy of the Korean king invited Russian monarch to establish a protectorate over Korea"[17]. So in Russian-Asian affairs a major role was given to China (Manchuria), Korea and Japan (the territorial dispute with the latter resulted in a disillusioning war of 1904-1905). Neither Siam nor any other country of Southeast Asia has ever been on the map of Russian expansion. Nevertheless, the Asiatic mission of the last Russian Czar was to have substantial impact on Russian foreign policy interests in Southeast Asia.

The first vague interest in Southeast Asia appeared in Russia as early as in the XVIII century, when some projects of using the countries of Southeast Asia "for

[15] Snow, K.A. The Russian Consulate in Singapore and British Expansion in Southeast Asia. In **Journal of Southeast Asian Studies**. Vol. 25 (September 1994). By National University of Singapore. P.345.

[16] Snow, K.A.. Russian Commercial Shipping and Singapore, 1905-1916. In **Journal of Southeast Asian Studies**. Vol. 29, Part 1. (March 1998). By National University of Singapore. P. 48.

[17] Dallin, D. **The Rise of Russia in Asia**. New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1949. P. 42.

supplying the needs of Russian colonies in America" appeared. These projects were voiced by Shelikhov G., an owner of the trading Russian-American company, and also by Kruzenshtern E., a great maritime navigator of Russia. They suggested establishing trading connections mainly with the Philippines (Manila) and Singapore and Java[18]. By the XIX century these plans were accelerated. Throughout the last quarter of the XIX century, the Russian government established consulates in all Southeast Asian countries except Indo-China. There is no doubt that the presence of Russia in the region had been noted by the British, Russia's main rival at that time, who were concerned about the potential danger posed by "the most striking naval power in the East"[19]. The British concern was exaggerated. Russia's major concerns were predominantly in the Far East, and Russian consulates in the area of Southeast Asia found it hard to convince their government to invest much effort into economic or political expansion in the region. For the most part, Russia's primary concern was to safeguard her economic and strategic concerns in China by carefully observing the designs and advances of imperialist rivals in the region, especially Great Britain but also France in Siam and the Dutch in Indonesia.

The Kingdom of Siam was regarded by Russian representatives in Southeast Asia as an important "buffer state" helping to ward off complete French and English domination in the region and "an influential field for the collection of information about Asian affairs"[20]. A treaty with Siam, for which the latter was asking for since 1860s, would not have been a violation of the treaty of Alliance with France, but in terms of Russian Asian policy, Siam was not at all a target for expansion or for gaining influence: it was rather a country that constantly attracted the attention of the Russian audience and government elite through the arising conflict with the French. Russia had also been quite reluctant about signing any trading treaties with Siam, who proposed this several times, as it did not make any sense for Russia economically but politically would have imposed certain obligations that Russia did not want. Moreover, "Russia was not in a strong enough position to throw her weight around in the imperialist

[18] Козлова М.Г. Россия и страны Юго-Восточной Азии. Москва, 1986. С. 20-23 / Kozlova, M.G. **Russia and the countries of Southeast Asia**. Moscow: Eastern Literature Publishing, 1986. P. 20-23.

[19] Snow K.A.. The Russian Consulate in Singapore and British Expansion in Southeast Asia… P.346.

[20] Ibid. P. 362.

politics of Southeast Asia, even handling the trade links rather cautiously,"[21] due to monetary considerations and political entanglements with France. Nevertheless, some of the Russian diplomats, including the Consul in Singapore Vyvodtsev A.M, who had been appointed to his post in 1890, did voice a more active position of Russia in respect to Siam: "The right and successful development of Siam depends on the peace in the region, which is threatened by France <…> Russia would gain by establishing trading relations with Siam and acquiring a more inside knowledge about Asian affairs"[22]. Moreover, Vyvodtsev understood that Siam possessed some resources that could have been of interest for the Russian Empire, especially teak wood[23]. Nevertheless, signing any treaties with the Southeast Asian Kingdom was by far not the primary goal of Russia. What Russia was trying to achieve by gradually turning her face towards Southeast Asia in the 1890s was to be able to counterbalance Great Britain, who had been active in the region, by means of her friendly relations with local governments which could have become a "playing trump"[24] in Russian negotiations with England over the disputes in Central Asia. That is one of the reasons why the Eastern voyage of Czarevitch Nicolas (which will be discussed later in this work) was initiated by the Russian court and why the invitation to visit Siam in 1891 from King Chulalongkorn, who had been quite aware of the political conjuncture and Russian interests in the region, was received by the Romanov family with enthusiasm.

Thus, we can see that Russia expressed amicable feelings and interest toward Siam but did not have any particular political aims in the region in terms of gaining control or colonizing any of the states. This factor, as well as the position of Russia in the world and her long-standing contacts with other European powers, attracted Siam to seek cooperation with the Russian Empire in the Siamese-French dispute.

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[21] Snow, K.A.. The Russian Consulate in Singapore and British Expansion in Southeast Asia… P. 361.

[22] АВПР, ф. Японский стол, д.1795, лл. 61-65. // Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М., 1967. С. 101 / Archive of the External Politics of the Russian Empire, Japanese fund, d.1795,pp.61-65 // Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М.: Наука, 1967 / Guber, A. (ed.). **The Politics of Capitalist States and the National Liberation Movements in SEA (1871-1917). Documents and Materials.** Moscow: Nauka, 1967. P. 101.

[23] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 6 / Pakamontri ,E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations.** Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007. P.82.

[24] Ibid. P. 84.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE OF PERSONAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL FAMILY AND THE ROYAL COURT OF SIAM IN THE ANTI-COLONIAL STRUGGLE OF THE KINGDOM AT THE END OF THE XIX-BEGINNING OF THE XX CENTURIES (1890S-1900S)

4.1. Russia's involvement in the French-Siamese crisis of 1893

Likhit Dhiravegin in his work on "Siam and Colonialism" makes a very peculiar reference to the fact that during the time of the Franco-Siamese crisis in 1893 "apart from a friendly support from Moscow <…>, Siam had only a mild support from Britain whom she hoped to depend on"[1]. Thus he presents the forces or players that were, from his point of view, of a particular importance for Siam at that moment and who could have been involved, to a certain extent, into the salvation of the crisis. This statement made me analyze the position of Russia and the level of her involvement in the crisis, noting that there was a slight imperfection in the way L.Dhiravegin formed his statement: it was not Moscow at that moment, it was St Petersburg – the capital city of Russia – from where all the Czars's instructions and orders were announced. Therefore, bearing in mind the foreign affairs situation of both Siam and Russia (described in the previous chapters), I had to closely look at the history of the Paknam crisis in order to make the analysis.

In spring 1893, the Siamese government became more and more alert about the rising tensions with the French and the possibility of French open intervention. On March 14, 1983, Pavie, the French minister at Bangkok, notified Siam that France intended to make effective her claim to all the territory east of the Mekong, notwithstanding the fact that it had been in Siam's possession for almost a hundred years. The Siamese offered to submit the dispute to arbitration, but French forces from Vietnam moved across the border and began to occupy Siamese territory. During April

[1] Dhiravegin, L. Op. cit. P. 53.

and May 1893, three small contingents of French troops attempted to occupy the middle and lower Mekong region by virtue of France's succession to the "rights" of Vietnam[2].

A crucial moment, as recorded in the diary of the General Advisor of the Siamese court G. Rolin-Jaequemyns, was 13 May 1893, when the General Advisor was called at 3 p.m. at night to the Palace where the King was conferring with the Council of Ministers. Messages received from the Paris and London Legations stated that Lord Rosebery, who succeeded Salisbury as Foreign Secretary of Great Britain, had asked Siam to send a telegram to France to say that, in spite of the skirmish on the left bank of the Mekong, Siam would not declare war but rather seek mediation from the Russian Czar[3]. Thus we could see that the attention of Russia was gradually drawn to the crisis as she was asked to get involved in arbitration[4].

Moreover, Siam did not believe France would want an open war, as "an expedition as disastrous and costly as in Tonkin would be very unpopular in France"[5]. Nonetheless, the Siamese, relying upon support from Great Britain and knowing that the world powers were also aware of the tensions between the parties, prepared to defend their territories. The Siamese forces resisted French troops sent into Laos by killing a French officer who led an attack on them, thus letting the French government have the casus belli they had long sought. When the French were refused permission to send gunboats up the Chao Phraya River to Bangkok, the French commander sent them up anyway, forcing the defenses at the mouth of the river (Paknam) in a short engagement, notwithstanding orders from Paris that the gunboats were to remain outside the sandbar at the mouth of the river, thus violating the Franco-Siamese treaty of 1856 under which no warships of any foreign power could proceed further than Paknam without Siamese consent. The Siamese were alarmed. Prince Devawongse made a "brilliant attempt" to save the situation, going down to the waterfront in Bangkok to congratulate the French commander on his daring in passing the Paknam forts and agreeing to the evacuation of Siamese troops from east of the Mekong. Pavie, however, with much French public

[2] Dhiravegin, L. Op. cit. P. 50.

[3] Tips, W. E. Gustave Rolin-Jaequemyns and the Making of Modern Siam. **The Diaries and Letters of King Chulalongkorn's General Adviser**. Bangkok: Whiter Lotus, 1996. P. 57.

[4] On 9 May Siam received a very vague answer from the USA to the invitation to be a mediator between the parties, and Prince Devawongse felt free to telegraph Russia to seek her mediation. (Ibid. P. 31.)

[5] Ibid. P. 57.

opinion soon behind him, delivered an ultimatum and demanded the cession to France of the whole of Laos east of the Mekong, the payment of indemnity of three million francs, and the punishment of Siamese officers responsible for French casualties in the fighting in Laos. Further demands soon were added, including occupation of Siamese seaboard provinces (Chantaburi and Trat) bordering Cambodia, and the creation of the twenty-five kilometer demilitarized zone on the west bank of the Mekong and in the whole of western Siamese Cambodia[6].

Rather than giving in immediately, it seems that the Siamese side tried to exhaust the French in protracted negotiations, hoping perhaps for more pressure for an honorable compromise from other powers. These other powers included Great Britain on the first hand. And truly, it was now Great Britain's turn to be alarmed. If France annexed all the territory covered by the first demand, not only was the question of the integrity of the Siamese dominions involved, but on the upper Mekong the French would come directly into contact with Burma and their claims would clash with British interests in the region. So the British ambassador in Paris was accordingly instructed to obtain from Develle, the French Foreign Minister at that time, a clear statement regarding France's aims. Develle promised that France would respect the independence of Siam and when Siam had accepted the terms the way would be open for establishment of a buffer state between the French and British empires[7]. That is why Siam, according to L.Dhiravegin, "received only a mild support from Britain" as "the British, to avoid a war with France, stayed aloof in times of crisis"[8].

As for the Russian Empire that played a role of a mediator in the crisis, her position seemed to be quite tricky, because the summer events of the Paknam crisis of 1893 could have had undesirable effects or could have distracted Russia and France from signing the Treaty of Alliance (which was described in the previous chapter) later this year. In spite of having friendly feelings towards Siam since the first encounter with the Siamese and exchanging amicable letters and higher honours between the King Rama V and the Emperor Alexander III (who lived through the last year of his reign and passed the throne to his son Nicolas II in 1894), Russia did not want to risk her

[6] Wyatt, D.K. Op. cit. P. 203.
[7] Dhiravegin, L. Op. cit. P. 52.
[8] Ibid. P.52.

relationship with the closest ally – France by taking any actions in the crisis that did not touch upon the interests of the Empire in any way.

In addition to that, some of the Russian sources on the topic stress that the Czarist diplomacy tended to look at what was going on in Southeast Asia from the point of Russia's own interests in neighboring China. Here we need to take into consideration the Russian antagonism with Great Britain, who also tried to get access to China through her Southeast Asian possessions. Therefore, Russian diplomacy "did not object the advancement of France (an ally) in the Mekong valley, which could have strengthened the French positions in the region and counterbalance England. Thus Russia preferred to remain more or less neutral during the crisis"[9].

Moreover, as it was stated in one of the publications of New York Times that dates back to 21 July, 1893, Russia was ready to provide support for France in case of the outbreak of the war:

Paris, July 20. – The statement is published that Baron Mohremnein, the Russian Ambassador to France, officially informed the French Government prior to the Session of the Chamber of Deputies on Tuesday last, when M. Develle, the Foreign Minister, defined France's position in the Franco-Siamese dispute, that Russia would support France on all points involved in the Siamese difficulty. It is further said that the Russian fleet in China waters is under orders to proceed to the Gulf of Siam for the purpose of supporting the French and of protecting the French residents in Siam. The fleet is expected soon to arrive in Siamese waters. <…>

The statement that Russia has signified her intention to support France in her dispute in Siam and that Russian war ships were now on the way to the Gulf of Siam

[9] Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М., 1967 . С. 103 //Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М.: Наука, 1967 / Guber, A. (ed.). **The Politics of Capitalist States and the National Liberation Movements in SEA (1871-1917). Documents and Materials**. Moscow: Nauka, 1967. P. 103.

was published in the Petit Journal, a Liberal Republican Paper. A similar statement appeared today in the Nation, a Radical newspaper[10].

The news about Russian war ships being sent to the Gulf of Siam are not proved by any formal sources and it could have been just a rumor spread by republican or radical groups. Nevertheless, in my opinion, in the middle of 1893 Russia did provide "friendly support" to Siam as a mediator in the conflict. In the amicable response that was received by King Chulalongkorn after he had asked for mediation, Alexander III expressed with sincerity that he "wished for the restoration of peace in the Kingdom and the regulation of discrepancies with France"[11]. King Chulalongkorn seemed to be satisfied with such a "warm telegram" from the Czar and felt that "now a peaceful resolution of all the problems with France was guaranteed"[12], although the General Advisor of the court G. Rolin-Jaequemyns was quite critical of the Russian Czar's response. In his diary he wrote "From my point of view it is a very guarded answer which basically means that I (Alexander III) would be glad if you (King Chulalongkorn) resolve your problems by yourself".[13]. But at the same time, it seems to me that in the case of an unfavorable outcome of the crisis for both parties France had a more solid ground to lean on Russia than Siam due to the long-standing relationship as allies, mutual interest in certain areas and personal contacts with Russia.

Siam, under the pressure of the circumstances and under the advice of the British, accepted the terms of the French ultimatum unconditionally and had to agree to further stipulations thrown in as guarantees, thus avoiding the war, but by no means putting an end to Siam's struggle for national sovereignty. The crisis of 1893 "marked the

[10] **The New York Times**. Wednesday. 21 July, 1893 [Online]. Available from: http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archivefree/pdf?_r=1&res=9C05E0DB103BEF33A25752C2A9619C946295ED7CF

[11] Документ №20 (АВПРИ, ф.Канцелярия, оп. 470, 1893, д.56, л. 45, подлинник). Россия-Сиам. 1863-1917. Документы и материалы. Под ред. Басенко Е.В. М., 1997. С. 46 / Document #20 (Archive of the External Politics of the Russian Empire, Chancellery fund, op.470, 1983, d.56, p.45, original). Basenko, E. (ed.). **Russia-Siam. 1863-1917. Documents and Materials**. Moscow: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997. P. 46

[12] Документ №21 (АВПРИ, ф.Канцелярия, оп. 470, 1893, д.56, л. 2, подлинник). Россия-Сиам. 1863-1917. Документы и материалы. Под ред. Басенко Е.В. М., 1997. С. 46 / Document #21 (Archive of the External Politics of the Russian Empire, Chancellery fund, op.470, 1983, d.56, p.2, original). Basenko, E. (ed.). **Russia-Siam. 1863-1917. Documents and Materials**. Moscow: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997. P. 46.

[13] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 58 / Pakamontri, E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations.** Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007. P.58.

beginning of the final phase in the Kingdom's attempt to salvage what it could from an impossible situation"[14]. From the 1893 crisis Siam learnt a grand lesson: personal links between the Chakri dynasty and the Western World did not exist. For most of the courts and people of Europe, Europe and America formed the world's core, and the rest of the globe was divided among them for purpose of trade and influence. The Western power's great concern was to resolve differences among themselves and the life of a faraway, nearly unknown Kingdom was important to just two governments – Paris and London, whose interests in China and India would clash in Siam[15]. King Chulalongkorn's far-sighted policy had to create bonds with as many Western states as possible by forging diplomatic links and sending Thai students to study in Europe. The only monarch, with whom His Majesty had already developed a friendship, was Nicolas II of Russia, who visited Thailand as a Czarevitch and succeeded to the throne in 1894. Learning from the 1893 crisis and having bonds with the new Emperor, King Chulalongkorn could thus project that his very carefully thought diplomatic relations with the Russian Imperial elite could have an impact on the Siamese struggle for independence and territory.

Analyzing these points, I would agree with L. Dhiravegin, who stated that "one important factor, which Western scholars failed to recognize that played a part in helping Siam in the face of the crisis (*or more likely consequences of the crisis*) was the friendship between King Chulalongkorn and the Czar of Russia. When the French became more antagonistic and increased their demands, the Emperor Nicolas, by then an important ally of France, strongly urged France to be moderate out of friendship for King Chulalongkorn"[16]. But my main argument here is that the factor of having friendly relations between the Czar (Nicolas II) and the King (Rama V) which proved to be helpful further on, played its role only after the crisis of 1893, while during the crisis Russia was still ruled by Nicolas' father Alexander III who, despite expressing friendly feelings towards Siam and providing some moral support to the Siamese at the time of the Paknam crisis, had little to do with this country, and had yet to sign a treaty with France, on which the two countries worked for many years.

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[14] Wyatt, D.K. Op. cit. P. 204.

[15] Rolin Jacquemyns ,D. European Perceptions of King Chulalonkorn's Visit to Europe. In Charit Tingsabadh (ed.). **King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe: Reflections on Significance and Impact**. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2000. P. 5

[16] Dhiravegin, L. Op. cit. P. 24.

4.2. The role of the personal qualities of Czar Nicolas II and King Chulalongkorn in fostering Russian- Siamese friendship

In order to prove my argument that only with the succession to the throne of Czar Nicolas II in 1894 the real bond between the royal courts of the two states was created allowing for Siam to feel secure of Russia's support, I would like to take a close look at the inception of the relationship between Czar Nicolas and King Chulalongkorn and at their personal qualities and conviction as a base for developing further contacts between the countries.

I believe that a real breakthrough in the relations between Siam and Imperial Russia was made by the visit of the heir to the Imperial Throne Czarevitch Nicolas, the son of the then reigning Czar Alexander, to Siam in 1891. It was part of the eastern voyage of the Czarevitch who was familiarizing himself with Asia and Asian affairs on the recommendation of his father. Notwithstanding its unofficial status, the visit gave a great impulse to the advancement of relations between the two countries and in fact marked the beginning of close and long-lasting personal friendship between the future Czar and King Chulalongkorn, and in a broader sense between the peoples of Russia and Siam.

The period when the Kingdom of Siam was seeking for a way to establish a friendship with Russia coincided with the Eastern voyage of the Heir to the Imperial throne, Czarevitch Nicolas, who embarked on a trip to Italy, Greece, Egypt, India, Sri-Lanka, Ceylon, Singapore, Java, Vietnam, China and Japan, with a purpose of exploring the world and taking part in the foundation ceremony of the Trans-Siberian railway[17]. In the course of the trip a secret telegram was received by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stating that "the Russian envoy in Germany was officially informed by the Siamese Charge d'Affaires that the King of Siam would be utterly glad if the Heir Apparent to the Russian throne paid His Majesty an honour by visiting Him in Bangkok

[17] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 6 / Pakamontri, E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations.** Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007. P. 6

<…> unless the stop in Siam interrupted the route of the voyage"[18]. Later on, an official invitation to visit Bangkok was delivered by Prince Damrong to Singapore, where the Russian squadron with Czarevitch Nicolas was resting. Thus, owing to the farsightedness of King Chulalongkorn, who initiated this first personal contact between the Russian Imperial family and the Court of Siam, the visit occurred in March 1891.

The Eastern voyage of Czarevitch Nicolas, and the visit to Siam in particular, was described in detail by Prince E.E. Uchtomskij, who was a travel companion and a tutor of the Russian Czarevitch. His second volume of the voyage's account "Czarevitch Nicolas of Russia in Siam and Saigon" is neither an official nor an unofficial report: it is a highly personal work of the author in which the personal impressions, whether they are aesthetic, political or religious, play a significant role. Nevertheless, from his forays into history and politics we can learn the general attitude of the Russians vis-à-vis Siam and we can obtain some idea about their perspective of the Siamese position in the conflict of Western countries as well as Russia's political aims in the region.

Prince Uchtomskij was a loyal and ardent patriot of Russia and was convinced that Russia had to play a role in the Orient. The vast territory of Russia has neither been purely Europe nor Asia. But already at that time Russia was more or less labeled an Asiatic country by most of Western Europe. However, the Prince was convinced that Russia had to play the role of protector of the people with whom is shared a common religion, the Slavs and Rumanians. Thus, moral and political expansion for Russia should take place in the East, not only among the independent states of those days, but among those that had already recognized foreign domination. According to Uchtomskij, no Asian feels out of place with Russia, which in turn feels at home in Asia. Thus, the Prince would not be surprised if his country would establish its moral and political domination over the regions, where other European powers had failed to do so. He specifically mentioned China, India and Korea – the Far East towards which the Russian Empire turned at the beginning of the reign of Czar Nicolas II. In this context, he saw the Eastern journey of the Czarevitch to "possess a special socio-historical significance for the future of Russia", since "nothing expands the outlook more, nothing

[18]Документ №8 (АВПРИ, ф.Японский стол, д.1746, л.112, копия). Россия-Сиам. 1863-1917. Документы и материалы. Под ред. Басенко Е.В. М., 1997. С. 18 / Document #8 (Archive of the External Politics of the Russian Empire, Japanese fund, d.1746,p.112,copy). Basenko, E. (ed.). **Russia-Siam. 1863-1917. Documents and Materials**. Moscow: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997. P. 18.

works so strongly on character than the direct, living confrontation with other cultures". In the words of Uchtomskij, "the world of marvels" was awaiting for His Imperial Highness in his Eastern Journey, and Siam was an important stop as well[19].

E.E. Uchtomskij writes in his account: "Until recently, the Siamese had grounds to be disenchanted with their relations with Europeans and they saw that they came only to visit in order to subject them and enrich themselves at their expense. Thus they have shown themselves to be deviant and even hostile at their expense. Peoples from the Orient have another idea about Russia. They know the power of the White Czar, they know our unselfishness, our respect for all peoples and their religions. The Siamese feel that we are not after their independence or their national existence. King Chulalongkorn has, it is said, made known to his people that the Czarevitch must be welcomed as a national guest, even as a friend"[20].

For Siam, there was perhaps no greater possible feat in the troubled times of 1891 than being a host to the future emperor of one of the great powers of the time. And King Chulalongkorn did not fail to realize that. The visit was regarded as most important by H.M. King Chulalongkorn who dispatched his cruiser, the Mongkut-Rachakumar with Prince Damrong to Singapore to welcome the Czarevitch. It was rumored that British sources tried to spread misinformation about the cholera epidemic in Siam to keep His Imperial Highness away from Bangkok, as Great Britain saw the Franco-Russian alliance as a threat for its own interests in Indochina, especially if the Czarevitch managed to come in the graces of the King of Siam and act as a leverage for French aspirations in the future. Indeed, Siam was having great trouble to consolidate its eastern boundaries and safeguard some of its vassals from French attempts at incorporating them into their fledging colony, Indochina. Since Russia and France were on very friendly terms and, eventually would enter into a formal treaty, the Czarevitch was a welcome guest and could perhaps be trusted on in the future to act as an intermediary on behalf of Siam's interests. However, at that point of time the view of the Russians in this respect was to the contrary: they saw Great Britain ready at any time to snatch Siam away from Indochina and incorporate it into their India Office administered territories.

[19] Uchtomskij, E.E. **Tsarevitch Nicolas of Russia in Siam and Saigon(1891).** Translated by Tipps, W. Bangkok: White LOtus, 1999. P. VII-XVIII.

[20] Uhtomskij, E.E. Op. cit. P. 7.

Precariously playing off these major powers and their local allies without firmly committing to either side and at the same time systematically improving internal administration is what kept Siam independent in the end. At that time, making an ally of Russia would have been an important achievement in this overall diplomatic strategy. From the sympathetic words of the Czarevitch and the enchantment with which the country was seen by all the Russians of the visiting party (some 1.500 people) we may see that the goal was achieved.

During the period from 19 to 24 of March 1891 the Russian visitors were shown around Bangkok and the King's summer residence in Hua-hin; navigated on gondolas, took part in an elephant hunt, enjoyed the dances of local drama and extravaganza staged shows, visited capital museums and places of interest where they got to know the treasures of Siam and thought that "everything, from the first day to the last spent with the hospitable king, His Majesty Chulalongkorn, was charming, unusually original and delightful"[21].

The personal friendship that developed through that time between the Czarevitch, who became Emperor Nicolas II, and King Chulalongkorn would last a lifetime.

Starting in 1891, official visits and personal contacts including the exchange of correspondence between the Russian Imperial family and the Siamese Royal family became frequent and played an important role in the development of relations between the two countries. In 1896 the Russian Imperial Government invited a Royal Siamese representative to participate in the festivities on the occasion of the coronation of Nicolas II as the Czar of Russia. Since that time Siam officially acquired a powerful friend in the person of Czar Nicolas II who would always do his best to lend support to Siam in resolving conflict with her neighbors. A year later, King Chulalongkorn himself paid a visit to Russia, and the highest honors, outmost hospitality and respect which was extended to King Chulalongkorn by the Russian Emperor significantly influenced the successful outcome of that trip. Russians reciprocated the visit of King Chulalongkorn with great interest, writing about the King's personality: "In his person we are greeting not only one of the greatest men of our time, but also a true friend of Russia. The power of this friendship lies in mutual respect, in the feeling of straightforwardness and

[21] Ibid. P. XII-XXV.

simplicity common to both peoples {…}. Our friendship towards Siam is honest and not hypocritical, which His Majesty the King of Siam can confidently rely upon"[22].

Wondering about the reasons for this "feeling of straightforwardness and simplicity" between Czar Nicolas II and King Chulalongkorn one should take a closer look at their different yet powerful personalities.

The Russian Emperor Nicolas II was born in 1868, in the year when King Chulalongkorn already acceded to the throne in Siam. Czar Nicolas II received education according to the standards of the Imperial Court and was under the constant control of his father Alexander III, who would at times be overprotective thinking that his son was still a child and had not yet developed. "He was not too bright in his studies, did not express enthusiasm towards any particular subject, but was fluent in German, French and English. His father did not try to teach him how to manage state affairs: he was allowed to attend ministerial meetings or other sittings of government advisors, but other than that he did not have any responsibilities of this kind"[23].

Arguably, the last Czar of Russia was one of the most controversial figures in Russian history. The memoirs of his contemporaries, the works by historians and modern researchers differ drastically in the way of analyzing his character and the turbulent time of his rule, which eventually allowed for revolution in Russia. Some contemporaries wrote that "in his manners he was simple and easy going. Being around him one could completely forget that he is in the presence of the Emperor. But behind the outer veneer of brilliant manners one could find a weak-willed but stubborn person, who would be selfishly proud of his position in the society but diffident in character. He was a devoted father of his family who would give family matters first priority over other issues"[24]. Some said that in his manners he was a little childish and too soft: "No one mentions his excessive warmth, friendliness and generosity, though outwardly he was always courteous and attentive, at the same time no one remembers any adverse

[22] Санкт-Петербургские Ведомости. 1897. №168. 23 июня (5 июля) // **cited from** Мельниченко Б.Н. Указ. Соч. С. 444./ Melnichenko, B.N. Op. cit. P. 444.

[23] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 68-69. / Pakamontri ,E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations**. Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007. P.68-69

[24]Гребельский П., Мирвис А. Дом Романовых. СПб.:«Санкт-Петербург», 1992. / Grebelskiy, P., and Mirvis, A. **The Romanov Family**. St Petersburg: «St Petersburg» Publishing, 1992. P. 104.

reactions on his part."[25] There is a reason to think that these qualities of the Czar allowed him to easily develop personal contacts with people. According to S. Witte, people were charmed by his expression of courtesy, but often his friendliness could verge on dislike as in his character he was volatile and suspicious[26]. "Nicholas shuffled his ministers and advisers, making no distinction between those who were talented, great, trivial or simply charlatans"[27]. Nevertheless, one could argue that this kind of behaviour could have been a reaction to the circumstances that the last Emperor of Russia was faced with when he felt the atmosphere of revolutionary rise in Russia. Generally he preferred solitude to the public limelight and did not welcome random people into his intimate circle. At the same time, like all Russian sovereigns of the XIX century, Czar Nicolas II had a brilliant ability to act in public and was gifted with "the famous Romanov charm"[28].

It is possible that this charm played its role in the development of friendship between Czar Nicolas II and King Chulalongkorn, who liked him as a person and liked the Czar's family, to the intimacy of which he was invited. Thus, despite all the controversial characteristics of Czar Nicolas II, he could apparently get along with King Chulalongkorn well. Moreover, it is possible that the position of the Czar and his political views were also important for the development of mutual interest and friendship. At times a contradiction appeared between Russia's international position and the trends of the conservative elements and circles close to the Czar. The alliance with France was necessary as a safeguard against the growing force of the two Germanic Empires in Europe. But France was republican, and anticlerical; the French Republic had been borne out of the turmoil of revolution and her political system still seemed to be a novel challenge to monarchist traditions. The Czar's personal views and his domestic worries were drawing him toward the German Emperor, who was likewise imbued with the faith in the grandeur of monarchical institutions[29]. It could be assumed

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[25]Скотт С. Романовы. Царская династия. Кто они были? Что с ними стало? Екатеринбург: Ларин, 1991 / Scott, S. **The Romanovs, Czars Dynasty. Who were they? What happened to them?** Ekaterinburg: Larin, 1991. P. 51.

[26] Витте С.Ю. Избранные воспоминания. М.: Мысль, 1991 / Vitte, S. **Selected Memoirs.** Moscow: Mysl, 1991. P. 299.

[27] Скотт С. Указ. Соч. С.54. / Scott, S. Op. cit. P. 54.

[28] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 69. / Pakamontri, E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations**. Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007. P.69.

[29] Dallin, D. **The Rise of Russia in Asia**. New Heaven: Yale University Press, 1949. P. 43.

that the same thing would draw the Russian Emperor towards the King of Siam, who was a representation of the powerful monarch in Southeast Asia: “It is this ruler of a foreign country from another culture, who had an exceptionally remarkable gift of spirit and soul. We have learnt to know the monarch, who is considerably significant to his kingdom as Peter the Great was once to Russia”[30].

For his part, King Chulalongkorn was 15 years older than the Russian Czar. “He was a diligent student who not only had Western advisors and teachers, but also was taught how to rule his country from an early age. {…} As a person he was very mature and responsible. His style of ruling the country was very circumspect, he knew how to make effective use of his country’s potential. He could trust his nobles who proved their devotion and talent. That is why the occasions of replacing government officials at the ministerial level occurred not often”[31]. In the memoirs of his Siamese and Western contemporaries he was generally described as an open-minded monarch who could learn from the West, from his nobles and from ordinary people, that is why he could always find a very balanced way to solve his country’s problems. As one English diplomat said: “He was meant to be a King”.[32]

Having discussed the way the contemporaries saw each monarch one might come to a conclusion that they were absolutely different. But it appeared that in the case of Czar Nicolas and King Chulalongkorn this difference became a force that attracted them as friends. This difference eliminated the possibility of one monarch somehow dominating the other. Instead, learning how different their characters were and how peculiar the position of both monarchs was they learnt to admire each other. Czar Nicolas obviously admired King Chulalongkorn as a representation of a powerful absolute monarch, who shared similar views on the role of monarchical institutions in the country. This might be the reason why the Russian Czar, who was imbued with a sense of Russia’s “manifest destiny in the East”[33], did lend support to the King in negotiating with his rivals. According to King Chulalongkorn’s letters among things that he admired the most about Czar Nicolas II was his devotion to his family: “I have

[30] Pornsan Watanangura (ed.). **The Visit of King Chulalongkorn to Europe in 1907: Reflecting on Siamese History**. Bangkok: Center for European Studies, Chulalongkorn University, 2008. P. 34.

[31] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 79. / Pakamontri, E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations**. Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007. P. 79.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Uchtomskij E.E. Op. cit. P. 16.

never seen a family where there is so much love and happiness" – he wrote in one of his letters to Queen Saowabha during his visit to St Petersburg in 1897[34].

Even though Czar Nicolas II and King Chulalongkorn had only had a chance to personally meet once before the European tour of the Siamese King and communicated mostly through correspondence, the 10 days visit to Russia of King Chulalongkorn prompted the development of sincere feelings between them.

4.3. The role of King Chulalongkorn's visit to Russia during his European Tour of 1897

As mentioned above, a bitter experience of the gunboat incident in 1893 provided an impetus for King Chulalongkorn to visit the global powers in Europe. After having asserted his power over different parts of his country, the King hired advisors to oversee the modernization of Siam's administration, the judicial system, and the armed forces. He could rely on Queen Saowapha, who was appointed regent and addressed as the sovereign, and on the members of his close family with Western education, Prince Damrong chief among them, as well as on his faithful political advisors. Therefore, King Chulalongkorn could begin his nine month journey in April 1897 with a peaceful mind, focusing only on the three aims of the trip: to be received as an equal by Western sovereigns; to see for himself the reasons for Western supremacy and wealth; and to make contacts for his sons to study in Western countries[35]. These aims were linked with a most worrying fact: France was still threatening Siam's integrity, notwithstanding a number of official treaties, which seemed to promise peaceful co-existence between the two countries.

In this respect it is worth noting that in 1896 France and Britain finally agreed on the Mekong as the boundary between British Burma and French Laos. They jointly guaranteed the independence of all that portion of Siam drained by the Chao Phraya

[34] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 71. / Pakamontri, E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations**. Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007. P. 71.

[35] Rolin Jacquemyns, D. European Perceptions of King Chulalonkorn's Visit to Europe… P 6.

River, each party further agreeing not to seek exclusive advantages there. At the same time, of course, each party tacitly reserved its right to advantages in, and even claims over, portions of Siam outside Chaopraya valley – Britain on the Malay Peninsular and France in areas drained by the Mekong in the northeast, in western Cambodia, and in the provinces on the Gulf of Siam southeast of Bangkok. To confirm these assumptions, Great Britain and Siam secretly reached an understanding in 1897 excluding third-power activities on the peninsular and forbidding Siam from constructing a canal across the Isthmus of Kra. Simultaneously, France made it clear that it regarded the northeast and Siamese Cambodia as clear fields for its own influence and activities[36], which even led to several incidents on the northeastern border of Siam.

In the course of political tensions between Siam and France, the true friendship that had developed since 1891 between Nicolas II and King Chulalongkorn, proved to be valuable for Siam when King Chulalongkorn embarked on his first trip to Europe. "The King explained his concerns in the letter to the Czar, who advised him to go to Russia before visiting France, and this is what the King did. From Italy, King Chulalongkorn went to Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, and then straight to Russia, where he was very well received"[37]. Upon His Majesty's departure from Warsaw to Peterhof, he received a very friendly telegram from Nicolas II: "*I am impatiently awaiting for the moment of your arrival here tomorrow. I recollect with such pleasure every detail of my stay in your Majesty's dominion and will be happy to thank you for it personally*"[38].

Thus Russia was chosen as the King's first official destination in the European trip. And there was important reasoning behind that. What could he possibly expect from Russia as a first stop on his European trip as a whole and to which extent did he think Russia could influence the situation with France? The major goal here was to make European leaders recognize Siam as an independent country that deserves to be treated on equal terms. In this respect the visit to Russia had all the prerequisites for

[36] Wyatt, D.K. Op. cit. P. 204-205.

[37] H.S.H. Prince Subhadaris Diskul. The Significance of King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe. In Charit Tingsabadh (ed.). **King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe: Reflections on Significance and Impact**. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2000. P. 1.

[38] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 29. / Pakamontri, E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations**. Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007. P.29.

success because, as it was discussed in the first chapter of this paper, Russia saw Siam from a different angle of view in the first place, and because personal ties between the Czar and the King had already been established. I believe that King Chulalongkorn realized that Russia was not going to openly interfere in Franco-Siamese affairs thus jeopardizing her political position of a close ally of France. What His Majesty felt he could do, since Russia had been expressing friendly feelings towards Siam so far, was presenting the problem to the Czar and asking him to use his diplomatic power in gently putting a little more pressure on France with regards to her claim on the Siamese territory, in order to prevent annexation or outbreak of hostilities; to have some kind of advisory role to ease tensions and communications. "*My visit could be a chance for our country's survival*", wrote King Chulalongkorn to Her Majesty Queen Saowapha from Florence on June 13 1897, and he was not wrong in his judgment. He then added in the letter from Essen, Germany (Sept. 5, 1897): "*… also, do not ever imagine that in time of trouble we can ask others to voice our problem or think for us. Do not imagine that anyone will take the trouble of doing anything for us. We are an independent state, so it is appropriate for us to say what we want. If they do not want us to be under their protection, they will not bother to deal with us*"[39].

And Russia did bother as, since time immemorial, she enjoyed the position of a "protector". The "White Czar" has always been a figure as sacred as the King in Siam in the eyes of the people, who was endowed with the power to protect. And I assume that Nicolas II was enjoying the status of a protector of a little Southeast Asian state that suited his image in the eyes of the Russian public. Moreover, through the friendship that developed between the Czar and the King, Nicolas II felt obliged to use this power, although it was a purely diplomatic game, a matter of secret correspondence and personal meetings, which were not revealed to the public.

Thus, from Hungary King Chulalongkorn traveled to Warsaw. There he boarded the Czar's special train to Peterhof, St Petersburg, where he was given a cordial reception and invited to the intimacy of the royal family. His further acknowledgement with the family of the Czar continued in Moscow. "As a matter of fact, the whole world would hear that the King of Siam had been entertained officially in the same way as

[39] Pornsan Watanangura (ed.). **The Visit of King Chulalongkorn to Europe in 1907: Reflecting on Siamese History**. Bangkok: , Center for European Studies, Chulalongkorn University 2008. P. 29.

other heads of a powerful state, but moreover, as a close friend. An official photograph of the King seated with the Emperor was circulated at that time"[40]. There is an interesting story that regarding this photo as one factor that stunned the French public, and this story is not only known in Russia, but also in Siam. H.S.H. Prince Subhadradis Diskul, while delivering his speech at the International Conference to Commemorate the Centennial Visit to Europe of King Chulalongkorn, said: "The Czar pledged that Siam would remain independent, although he did not elaborate on how this would be achieved. In St Petersburg, the King stayed at Peterhof. Soon after his arrival, the Czar invited the King to have their photograph to be published in the French journal "Illustration", and according to the stories told in my family, after the photo appeared in print, tensions between France and Siam eased considerably"[41].

As for France, until the day that King Rama V arrived in Europe to begin his tour, attempts had been made through negotiations with the French government and through other diplomatic channels to secure a positive confirmation with regard to his visit to France and all the necessary protocol. But all the attempts of the Siamese had been to no avail and the initially planned program had to be altered. It was hoped that the expected warm reception by the Russian court would pave the way for an equally warm welcome to the King's other destinations. More significant, however, was the fact that by the end of the King's stay in Russia due to the personal intervention of the Czar (and maybe the photograph that alarmed the French public), the French side finally agreed to King Rama V's proposed visit[42]. It was no longer possible for French President Faure not to invite King Chulalongkorn and to give him the same regal reception, more especially as President Faure was due in St Petersburg to seal the Russian-French friendship agreement. From what was said at that time, the Russian reception of King Chulalongkorn by the Czar made it impossible not to treat the King in the most regal way. "This was the most tangible achievement of the Russian trip, but the most capital one"[43].

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[40] Rolin Jacquemyns, D. European Perceptions of King Chulalonkorn's Visit to Europe… P. 6.

[41] H.S.H. Prince Subhadaris Diskul. The Significance of King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe… P. 1.

[42] Suntravanich, Ch. Siam and the First Hague Conference of 1899. In Tingsabadh, Ch. (ed). **King Chulalongkorn's Visit to Europe: Reflections on Significance and Impact**. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 2000. P. 36-37.

[43] Rolin Jacquemyns, D. European Perceptions of King Chulalonkorn's Visit to Europe… P. 7.

Moreover, as King Chulalongkorn wrote to prince Devawongse from Peterhof, July 5, 1897, the perception of Russia on the Siamese matter was similar to Siam's:

"Their vision of our difficulties matches all of our points. They expressed good will to assist in the clarification of the real benefits to settle the situation for France, since the current policy of France towards Siam only gives more advantages to England. The French Ambassador will be invited for a personal talk. Moreover, a letter will be drafted to be send to Mr. Hanotaux (the French Foreign Affairs Minister).

The great involvement of Russia in these matters can be explained by the fact that Hanotaux sent an ambassador to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to negotiate and reach agreement on my visit to Paris. All this, however, has some pitfalls. It seems that in advance of my arrival here, they prepared prerequisites for the improvement of our relations with France, which as I understand, will finally give good results. But we do not ask Russia to take decisions for us. Just one friend is helping the other two friends to come to common terms"[44].

During the visit, the Czar did not only express his sympathy towards Siam in its relations with France, but also promised that Russia would do her best, as both a friend of Siam and an ally of France, to improve the situation. According to some sources he even repeated several times: "The independence of Siam will never be lost, nor it will be disturbed"[45]. The Czar further offered to establish formal diplomatic relations with Siam and to appoint an envoy to the Siamese court so that the envoy could report back to him personally any progress or hindrance in Franco-Siamese relations, especially with regard to the dispute in the on-going negotiations between the two governments. Finally, the Czar suggested a gesture of goodwill and sincerity that King Chulalongkorn sends one of his sons, to his court as a student under his personal guardianship.

[44] Premier Voyage en Europe de Roi Chulalongkorn (1897). In **Correspondance Royale et autres ecrits au cours de son voyage en Europe**. Bangkok: Kurusapha, 2003. P. 195.

[45] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 35. / Pakamontri, E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations.** Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007. P.35.

4.4. The exchange of diplomatic representatives between Siam and Russia

Following the decision of the two sovereigns, the exchange of diplomatic representatives took place in 1897 and 1898. Phraya Suriya Nuvat, the Siamese Minister who was representing King Chulalongkorn in Europe with residence in Paris, received an additional appointment to the Russian Imperial Court. He had accompanied the King on his Russian trip and had been introduced to Nicolas II.

In 1898 Alexander Olarovski, the Russian Consul-General in New York, was transferred to Siam and appointed as the Russian Charge d'Affaires and Consul-General. As Olarovski reported to St. Petersburg, «the Russian legation received one the best plots of land in Bangkok for its location, because no other Foreign Embassies were located as near to the Royal Palace, as ours»[46]. Before his departure to Bangkok, Olarovski received a ten-page letter of instructions from the Russian Foreign Ministry. The major part contained clear directions concerning Russian policy towards Siam. The essence of that policy was expressed in the following lines of the letter: "*Your conduct in its entirety should bear the imprint of favorable attention which our august monarch is willing to extend to the person of the Siamese King, as well as to the fortunes of his people; it should respond to the sincerity and warmth which are placed by Siam at the base of our relations. Simultaneously, you should avoid any mercantile motive whatsoever, or desire to pursue any kind of benefit. Finally, your conduct should respond to the expectations of that country to receive on the part of Russia the desired concern for her interests and find in this concern the necessary moral support in the unequal struggle with her mighty neighbors*"[47].

The text of the letter had been personally approved by the Russian Czar, and the diplomatic representatives of Russia in Bangkok consistently followed it.

According to Ostrovenko E., Alexander Olarovski was not a random choice for the first Russian envoy in Siam. In 1896-1897, while he was still in New York,

[46] **From the History of Thai-Russian Relations**. [Online]. Available from: http://rusconsulphuket.org/thai_russian_relation.html. The Office of Honorary Consul of the Russian Federation in Phuket, Krabi and Phanga, 2004. [2009, September 6].

[47] Россия-Сиам. 1863-1917. Документы и материалы. Под ред. Басенко Е.В. М.: МИД, 1997 // Basenko, E. (ed.). **Russia-Siam. 1863-1917. Documents and Materials.** Moscow: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997. P. 85.

Olarovski had prepared a number of analytical reports on the situation in and around Siam for the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His conclusions regarding the significance of Siam as one of the only two nations in Asia which were independent at that time (Japan being the second one), and were also undergoing advanced modernization, helped to shape the Russian Government's policies towards this country.

Olarovski stressed in his reports that in the political and economic circumstances then existing in the Far East, the Russian-Siamese friendship could become highly beneficial for both countries. A very well educated, experienced diplomat and thoughtful analyst, Olarovski was also a cheerful and charming host when he entertained Thai and foreign dignitaries in his residence. His status among foreign diplomats and other foreigners living in Bangkok was slightly different, as it always bore the mark of the special relationship existing between the monarchs of the two countries[48].

Moreover, in Russia the envoys to the Siamese court also enjoyed a very special status as they were allowed into the close circle of those people who had a chance to join the privacy of the august family. And this privacy, as discussed above, was highly valued by Czar Nicolas II. It should be noted that Czar Nicolas II and the Russian government paid a great deal of attention to the work of Russian representatives in Siam; they were as serious about the activities of Russia's envoys in Siam as in any other country of Europe. The Emperor took an active part in all the matters relating to the Kingdom. He and the Empress Alexandra Fyodorovna often met with Russian diplomats in Siam on their visits to Russia. The Russian press never neglected to record the occasions of such meetings. For example, the reference to Alexander Olarovski having "a good fortune to be presented, among others, on Friday, December 27 to Her Majesty the Empress Alexandra Fedorovna" can be found on the pages of "St Petersburg Vedomosti" (issued on 23 December 1902 (10 January 1903), № 334 (section "Chronicle"), p. 4)[49].

As for the Embassy of the Kingdom of Siam in the Russian Empire, it is documented that the diplomatic representatives of Siam in Russia officially held office

[48] Ostrovenko, E. Op. cit. P. 121.

[49] Санкт-Петербургские Ведомости. №334. Секция «Хроника», 23 Декабря 1902 (10 января 1903). / ***cited from*** Пылева А. Итоги и перспективы политического и культурного диалога России и Королевства Таиланд в XIX – нач. XXI вв. Выпускная квалификационная работа IV курса, СПб, 2008. P. 7. // Pyleva, A. **The Results and Future Perspectives of the Political and Cultural Dialogue between Russia and the Kingdom of Siam in the XIX-early XXI Centuries**. B.A. Thesis. Department of History of Southeast Asia. St Petersburg State University, 2008 P. 7.

from November 16, 1897 until 1917 (according to the Yearbook of the Foreign Ministry of Russia for 1897 - 1917). We also know that the official address of the embassy since 1903 was the following address: Saint - Petersburg, Admiralty Embankment 6.

Some references to the activities of the Siamese envoys in St Petersburg can also be found in the publications of "St Petersburg Vedomosti" for 1901, 1903, 1914. It is very important that while in Russia, Siamese envoys were able to use their new position for the benefit of their country and pursue an active diplomatic policy with regard to representatives of other countries, including European states, the dependence on which was still felt in Siam, despite substantial support from Russia. The Siamese representatives participated in all the major events of the Diplomatic Corps, and had regular meetings with distinguished guests from the European powers who came to Russia. The newspaper "St Petersburg Vedomosti" wrote in April 12, 1901 marking the visit of French Foreign Minister Theophile Delcasse to Russia: " On April 11 the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Delcasse was visited by the Ambassadors: Turkish Gusni-Pasha, British - Sir Charles Stuart-Scott ..., by envoys extraordinary and ministers plenipotentiary: Portuguese – Mr. D'Ornellas, Siamese – Mr. Mogibal-Boriraks, etc"[50].

Thus, by using the references of St Petersburg newspapers it is possible to observe the active work conducted by the Siamese legation in Russia, especially the painstaking attempts of Siamese diplomats to establish serious contacts with influential countries in Europe through their friendship with a powerful Eurasian state - Russia. There is no doubt that the Siamese received substantial support from the Russian side in their dealings with French expansionism in Siam. The activities of Russian representatives in Siam in the early XX century will be discussed in more detail in the following section of my paper.

[50] Санкт-Петербургские Ведомости. №98. 12 (25) апреля 1901 / ***cited from*** Пылева А. Указ. Соч. С. 7 // Pyleva, A. Op. cit. P. 7.

4.5. The role of the Russian legation in soothing Franco-Siamese disputes

As soon as the first Russian legation was established in Bangkok, Russian diplomats, most noticeably Russian Consul-General Alexander Olarovski, initiated active diplomatic activities on behalf of the Russian government and provided their assistance to the Siamese court in resolving Franco-Siamese disputes.

According to the memoirs of the Russian diplomat A.D. Kalmykow, who was sent to Bangkok along with A.Olarovski, the major goals of the legation were explained to him in a short talk with Count Muraviev, the Russian Foreign Minister at that time:

"*France, our (Russia's) ally, was having difficulties with Siam. It was necessary to help her settle them without endangering the independence of the Siamese kingdom and provoking the armed intervention of England. He meant: make things better if possible but not worse on any account* "[51].

This brief explanation made by Count Muraviev, expressed the official position of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: the Russian Empire was an ally to France and was going to help her in her struggle in Southeast Asia, but after the personal intervention of the Czar and his friendship with King Chulalongkorn, who asked for some assistance in the matter, Russia would lend this help provided that her actions preserved Siamese independence and help to come up with a way out of the conflict.

A.Olarovski tried his best to fulfill his duties and to follow the instructions of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but in the position of a personal representative of the Russian Emperor he often went beyond the instructions and had to put some "personal touch" to resolve conflicting matters. Olarovski sympathized with Siam, which was trapped between two expansionist powers – Great Britain and France, and he was touched by the hope with which Bangkok looked at him and the Russian legation. He wrote in 1898: "Not only the Siamese government, but most of the Siamese intelligentsia viewed Russia as the only country empowered with the ability to

[51] Kalmykow, A. D. **Memoirs of a Diplomat. Outposts of the Empire**, 1893-1917. New Heaven&London: Yale University Press, 1971. P. 102.

guarantee independence of their country based on solid grounds and secure it from territorial annexations of the mighty neighbors"[52]. He closely connected Russian efforts to preserve Siamese independence with the general Far Eastern policy of Russia, stating that "it served Russian interests to have an independent friendly state South of China, where Russia had particular plans to expand her markets through Yunnan, Tibet and Xichuan, than to let England or France strengthen their positions in Indochina and get access to southern Chinese provinces". He particularly stressed the idea of dislodging Great Britain, Russia's major rival over Yunnan, from the Kingdom of Siam by Russian means or by joint efforts of Russia and France. As a Consul-General of the Russian Empire and a keen patriot, Olarovski even proposed ousting Englishmen, who held different positions in the Siamese government, and replacing them by Russians[53]. But economically Russia did not have strong positions in Southeast Asia; therefore the activities of Olarovski as a Consul-General were quite limited due to a poor development of Russian trade. But in the area of diplomacy Russia was strong, and following the order of the Russian Emperor Olarovski concentrated his diplomatic efforts on soothing Franco-Siamese disputes and supporting Siam in her struggle to preserve sovereignty.

Olarovski started his work in Bangkok by deeply analyzing French politics in the region and acquired profound knowledge of it. He thoroughly studied all the documents previously signed between France and Siam. For example, he sent a full version of the Franco-Siamese agreement of 1893 to St Petersburg, by making elaborate comments on each paragraph of the agreement and giving examples of how loosely it was interpreted by the French colonial administration and how it was used to serve the French interests to the detriment of Siam[54]. According to the documents of the Russian mission in

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[52] Документ 69. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М., 1967. С. 160. // Document 69. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М.: Наука, 1967 / Guber, A. (ed.). **The Politics of Capitalist States and the National Liberation Movements in SEA (1871-1917). Documents and Materials**. Moscow: Nauka, 1967. P. 160.

[53] Козлова М.Г. Указ. Соч. С. 261. // Kozlova M.G. Op. cit P. 261.

[54] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 125. / Pakamontri, E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations.** Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007. P. 125.

Bangkok, which were first organized in a book “Russia-Siam 1863-1917. Documents and Materials” and published in 1997 under the supervision of Russian and Thai Foreign Ministries, Olarovski took time to thoroughly prepare every official and unofficial meeting with the French diplomats and colonial administrators, by consulting with Prince Dewawongse (Siamese Minister of Foreign Affairs), Prince Damrong (Minister of Interior) and for some important matters with the King himself, and by sending elaborate reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Russia[55].

It is said, that soon after his arrival, Olarovski proposed the cession to France of a piece of territory in the extreme northeast of Siam (apparently Battambang and neighboring areas which could not upset the economic balance of Siam) as a compensation for the French evacuation of Chantaboon, the occupation of which angered the Siamese and affected the prestige of the King. The offer was actually made by the Siamese government in 1898, but was rejected by the French legation till further consideration. Nevertheless, the proposals and observations made by Olarovski were taken into consideration by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and were used to exert some pressure on France in Siamese matters. Thus, at the end of 1898 Count Muraviev, the Russian Foreign Minister, ordered the Russian envoy in Paris Duke Urusov to meet with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs and discuss the situation regarding Siam, using the reports made by Olarovski. In his instruction, Count Muraviev wrote that “taking into consideration the fact that Russia, having no direct interests in Siam, had the main objective to assist in promoting good neighboring relations between Siam and France, who would not want to have any complications in Asia as they would create favorable conditions for the expansion of Great Britain, Russia should try to make the Foreign Minister of the French Republic pay closer attention to the laments of Siam”[56]. In 1899, Ambassador Urusov received more precise recommendations “to do everything possible in order to assist Siam in the matter of evacuating Chantaboon”[57]. Here, according to A.Kalmykow, Russia could play on the

[55] Документы 33, 35,44-72. Россия-Сиам. 1863-1917. Документы и материалы. Под ред. Басенко Е.В. М., 1997. С.60-147. // Documents 33, 35, 44-72. Basenko, E. (ed.). **Russia-Siam. 1863-1917. Documents and Materials**. Moscow: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997. P. 60-147.

[56] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 125. / Pakamontri, E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations.** Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007P. 125.

[57] Козлова М.Г. Указ. Соч. С. 265. // Kozlova, M.G. Op. cit. P. 265.

feelings of the French, who, by the decision of a new Foreign Minister, Theophile Delcasse, had by then changed the orientation of the French policy and were striving for an entente with England and for the elimination of all France's colonial entanglements. England disliked the French occupation of Chantaboon, and its evacuation would have pleased her[58].

It is also interesting that Olarovski realized that the French colonial administration had a lot of freedom in taking actions without consulting the central government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris beforehand. Many of these actions were aimed at creating conflict situations on the Franco-Siamese border in the North-East and East of Siam, which led to the French acquisition of more territories and people. In one of his reports, Olarovski expressed an opinion that most of these conflicts could have been resolved by direct negotiations between the Royal government of Siam and the Governor-General of French Indochina Paul Doumer, who was more moderate towards Siam than the representatives of the French mission in Bangkok. Olarovski suggested personally going to Saigon in order to make preliminary consultations about the meeting with P.Doumer, but the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not approve of his initiative[59]. Nevertheless, Olarovski was told to do everything to ensure that P.Doumer would not decline to pay a visit King Chulalongkorn after the latter sent the Siamese embassy to Saigon. In order to do so, A.Kalmykow, a diplomat from the Russian legation in Bangkok, was sent to Saigon along with the Siamese embassy. As A. Kalmykow recalls in his memoirs, the presence of a member of the Russian Siamese legation in Saigon, coinciding with the sudden appearance of the Siamese embassy in French Indo-China, could offer a serious guarantee for the French side and did not allow them to reject the welcoming of the Siamese embassy, raising the status of Siam in the eyes of the French. Moreover, P. Doumer did arrive in Bangkok later that year and personally met with King Chulalongkorn to develop the conditions of the Franco-Siamese agreement where he confirmed the evacuation of Chantaboon. For a large part P. Doumer and King Chulalongkorn were able to come to common terms because of the assistance of Olarovski, as both sides understood the advantages of Russian arbitration, which "allowed resolving Franco-Siamese disputes without detriment of both parties

[58] Kalmykov, A. Op. cit. P. 117-132.
[59] Козлова М.Г. Указ. Соч. С. 265. // Kozlova, M.G. Op. cit. P. 265.

and humiliating the dignity of Siam"[60]. Since this visit improved the relations between Siam and France, King Chulalongkorn thought it would be necessary to tell his friend Czar Nicolas II about the positive results of the visit in one of his letters:

"The fact that Your Majesty is still willing to help Siam after all that had already been done fills me with gratitude. And I use the opportunity to inform you of the current situation between France and Siam {…}". (12/24 August, 1899)[61]

Nevertheless, in the early XX century ambitions of the French mission in Bangkok were still high and many French were dissatisfied with the results of the preliminary Franco-Siamese agreement. At the end of 1901, France became more demanding in her dealings with Siam. But even though Russia was perplexed by the anti-Russian atmosphere in the Far East intensified by the conclusion of a British-Japanese agreement in 1902, Russia continued providing support to Siam in her disputes with France. When the President of the French republic E. Loubet visited St Petersburg in 1902 and tried to convince Czar Nicolas II to approve of French expansionist plans in Siam, the Czar of Russia refused[62].

It should be said that in the first decade of the XX century conditions were much improved for a final settlement with Britain and France and for the revision of the unequal treaties of King Mongkut's reign. Anglo-French rivalry had abated with the exhaustion of new opportunities for competition, the necessity of concentrating on the possessions in hand, and the increasing dangers of the situation in Europe, where Germany was gaining power. France, Russia's ally, and Great Britain, a Japanese ally by the treaty of 1902, were driven by international politics to come to a friendly understanding. A new era was inaugurated with their conclusion of the Entente Cordiale in 1904 that included a declaration concerning Siam, Madagascar and the New Hebrides (Vanautu). In Siam, the British recognized a French sphere in influence to the east of

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[60] Документ 74. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М., 1967. С. 169-170. // Document 74. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М.: Наука, 1967 / Guber, A. (ed.). **The Politics of Capitalist States and the National Liberation Movements in SEA (1871-1917). Documents and Materials**. Moscow: Nauka, 1967. P. 169-170.

[61] Россия-Сиам. 1863-1917. Документы и материалы. Под ред. Басенко Е.В. М., 1997. С.142. // Basenko, E. (ed.). **Russia-Siam. 1863-1917. Documents and Materials**. Moscow: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997. P. 142.

[62] Козлова М.Г. Указ. Соч. С. 266. // Kozlova, M.G. Op. cit. P.266.

the River Menam's basin; in turn, the French recognized British influence over the territory to the west of the Menam basin. Both parties disclaimed any idea of annexing Siamese territory[63].

Nonetheless, negotiations with Britain and France over Siam went on intermittently for many years, and results were slow in coming. By the agreement of 1904 with France, territories opposite Luang Prabang were ceded to Bangkok, and French privileges in the northeast were specified in return for a promised French withdrawal – at long last – from Chantaburi. Complete withdrawal and French abandonment of all claims of jurisdiction over their "Asian" subjects was achieved only with the conclusion of a 1907 treaty, which ceded to France the provinces of Battambang, Siem Reap, and Srisophon in western Cambodia[64]. In 1909 Siam also ceded to Britain the four provinces north of Malaya: Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah and Perlis.

Thus Siam's struggle for independence from colonial rule was ended at the turn of the XX century. And even though it resulted in making concessions and yielding territories, Siam managed to withstand during that time due to the farsightedness of Siam's monarch who skillfully applied the "concept of a balance of powers" in his foreign policy, where his friendship with the Czar and the help of the Russia diplomatic mission should not be underestimated.

[63] **Declaration concerning Siam, Madagascar, and the New Hebrides.** [Online]. Available from: http://www.heritage.nf.ca/exploration/inclosure3.html [2009,April 8].

[64] Wyatt, D.K. Op. cit. P. 206.

CHAPTER V

THE ROLE OF PERSONAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL FAMILY AND THE ROYAL COURT OF SIAM IN STRENGTHENING CULTURAL TIES BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XX CENTURY (1900S)

5.1. Perpetuating cultural contacts between the Kingdom of Siam and the Russian Empire

After King Chulalongkorn's visit to Russia, the interest of Russian scholars, diplomats, aristocrats and public figures in Siam reached its peak. One of the major cultural events which boosted this interest was the performance of a company of the Royal Siamese Ballet in St Petersburg in 1900. The traditional Siamese theatre had staged the Ramakien in front of the future Czar Nicolas II during his visit to Siam in 1891. In 1900 it staged two performances in St Petersburg, as part of the first ever international tour of Siamese dancers. The Siamese ballet greatly impressed the artistic circles of the Russian capital and led to the real discovery of Siam by the Russian public.

A famous ballet columnist of the time, N.Svetlov wrote about the performance: "The main motives of some of the dances, for example, the Fan Dance, the Lantern Dance and the Dance with Silver Lances, are products of truly genuine choreographic thinking and beautiful form, full of elaborate patterns and complex combinations and, adjusted in a certain way to the requirements of our art, it could even enter our European choreography as new elements"[1].

V. Rozanov, a prominent Russian philosopher, was astonished by "the great civilization" that the Siamese ballet dancers presented to the Russian audience. He thought that "there was nothing more amazing, new and surprising than the performance of the Siamese ballet"[2].

The impression of the Siamese dancers on the Russian public was so great that it created an incentive for deeper research of Siamese culture and history. During the

[1] Ежегодник Императорских театров. Сезон 1900-1901. С. 298. // **cited from** Мельниченко Б.Н. Указ. Соч. С. 447./ Melnichenko, B.N. Op. cit. P. 447.

[2] Мир искусства. 1901. Т.5. № 1. С. 44-47. // **cited from** Мельниченко Б.Н. Указ. Соч. С. 447./ Melnichenko, B.N. Op. cit. P. 447.

period of 1895-1913 more than 30 books and brochures on Siam were published and immediately sold out in Russia. Impressed by the elegance of the Siamese ballet, famous Russian stage decorator and artist L. Bakst painted a beautiful picture "The Sacred Dance of Siam", and used Siamese motives in many stage decorations for oriental theme ballet performances[3].

In the early XX century, the first collections of Siamese art appeared in Russian museums. In 1906 N. Vorobiev, a government official from the Imperial Ethnographic Museum, was dispatched by the Russian Academy of Sciences to Bangkok and Ayutthaya with the task of collecting samples of Siamese sculpture. His collection included 144 items of Buddhist sculpture, traditional Siamese weapons, musical instruments, ceramics, clothes, coins and even banknotes, which are now on display at the Museum of Ethnography and Anthropology, widely known as the Chamber of Oddities or Kunstkamer, in St Petersburg. His article " The inventory of the collection of Buddhist statues, purchased in Siam in 1906 " appeared in print in Russia at the beginning of the XX century along with a Russian translation of the book by German author A. Grunvedel "Scenes from the Life of Lord Buddha in Traiphum" (St Petersburg, 1904).

Another collection of Buddhist sculpture that now decorates the Hermitage museum of art in St Petersburg was collected by G. Planson, one of the diplomatic representatives of Russia in Siam.

It is also worth mentioning that the religion of Siam aroused great interest in Russia as well. Siam, as the only Buddhist country which retained its independence in Southeast Asia, attracted a lot of attention from Buddhists in other countries. In March-April 1901, Siam was visited by the delegation of Buryat Buddhists, led by the pre-eminent lama of East Siberia Choynzin Iroltuev. Another significant event happened in St Petersburg where the beginning of the XX century marked the foundation of the first Buddhist temple. Its project received approval from the Government of Russia and personally from Czar Nicholas II. The first sermon in the temple took place on Feb. 21, 1913 when Russia was celebrating the 300th - anniversary of the Romanov dynasty. The son of King Chulalongkorn, King Vajiravudh presented a gilded copper statue of a

[3] Ostrovenko, Y. Russian-Thai Relations: Historical and Cultural Aspects. **Journal of the Siam Society.** Vol. 92, Bangkok: The Siam Society, 2004. P. 122.

seated Buddha on the occasion of the erection of the Temple of Lord Buddha in St. Petersburg. The second statue - a bronze statue of a standing Buddha was received from the collection of G. Planson, which was mentioned earlier.

At that period of time, Russian culture had yet to be presented in Siam[4]. Although, it is worth mentioning that the world-famous Karl Fabergé, the founder of the House of Fabergé and imperial jeweler, while in Bangkok for the coronation of King Vajiravudh, presented his jewelry to the Siamese public, making a fortune on selling some outstanding items to the Siamese elite, and also created a rich collection of jewelry with Siamese motives.

Thus we may see that cultural contacts that were perpetuated by the friendship between the Russian Imperial Court and the Royal Court of Siam flourished at the beginning of the XX century, creating favorable images of both countries among their people.

5.2. Prince Chakrabongse's Russian experience

The highlight of King Chulalongkorn's visit to Russia in 1897 was none other than the decision by King Rama V to send one of his favourite sons, Prince Chakrabongse, to study in this country[5]. For that the Emperor put forward the proposal that, should King Chulalongkorn agree, he would be happy to receive one of his sons at the Imperial Court and make himself entirely responsible for his future education. The Czar's offer must have been seen as a great opportunity by King Chulalongkorn for, although he had many sons to choose from, his choice fell unerringly on his favorite, Prince Chakrabongse, as being likely to benefit most from this experience and, in so doing, bring honor to his father and his country. Indeed, Prince Chakrabongse's Russian experience became a true example of the strong friendship between the Russian Imperial family and the Royal Court of Siam, and the education that he received in Russia made him one of the most outstanding political figures in contemporary Siam.

[4] The first Russian Ballet troupe (the famous Kremlin Ballet) visited Thailand only in 2003 presenting ballet based on the story of "Katya and the Prince of Siam". (http://www.kremlin-gkd.ru/eu/index.htm)

[5] Suntravanich, Ch. Siam and the First Hague Conference of 1899… P. 36.

In 1896, the year before his father's tour of Europe and Imperial Russia, Chakrabongse had already been settled in England in the house of a Dr Yarr near Camberley, while his brother Crown Prince Vajiravudh was staying with a Colonel Hume, who was coaching him for entry into Sandhurst. Chakrabongse was there to pursue his studies and perfect his English. He had with him his attaché, Nok Young, and a friend of his own age, Nai Poum Sakara. Poum was not a noble or a prince, but a brilliant student and winner of the King's Scholarship. He had been chosen to accompany Chakrabongse not only for companionship, but because the astute King considered that this clever hard-working boy would act as a spur and encouragement to the scholastic endeavors of his son.

Following the King's decision, in May 1898 both boys left for Russia via Paris, where they were joined by the Siamese Minister to Russia, Phraya Suriya, and Phraya Mahibal, their tutor. In St Petersburg they were welcomed by a Court Minister and driven to the vast Winter Palace, where a magnificent apartment reserved for royal guests was placed at their disposal. While preparing to welcome the high-level guests the Minister of the Imperial Court V.B. Fredericks wrote to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Empire M. Muraviev on 14 (26) of April 1898: "His Majesty the Emperor has deigned to command:

1. To provide for the Siamese Prince Chakrabongse a room in the Winter Palace, and for the summer months - in Peterhof, while he is waiting for the approval of his final education plan

2. to enroll the Prince in the course of the Imperial Corps des Pages

3. to propose to the Director of the Corps des Pages to directly enter into relations with the Siamese Prince in order to gather information necessary for the creation of his individual education plan[6].

Having spent the short Russian summer near the residence of the Emperor in Peterhof Chakrabongse and Poum returned to St Petersburg where, instead of boarding with the Corps des Pages in a building erected by the Russian Czar Pavel I for the Knights of Malta, they had been allotted more "simple" accommodation in the Winter Palace again: "a roomy and very comfortable apartment on the Commandant's

[6] Россия-Сиам. 1863-1917. Документы и материалы. Под ред. Басенко Е.В. М.: МИД, 1997. С. 92. // Basenko, E. (ed.). **Russia-Siam. 1863-1917. Documents and Materials.** Moscow: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997. P. 92.

Entrance, with windows looking over the immense square – as large as the Place de la Concorde"[7]. A staff of court servants and a chef was also provided, and Captain Krulof of the Emperor's Lancers, was appointed their "gouverneur", responsible for their welfare. The Prince's first teacher of the Russian language was P.N. Ardashev, a master of Moscow State University. They got to know each other in London, before the arrival of the Prince in Russia. P.N. Ardashev wrote to Count Muraviev in 1898: "Taking into consideration the fact that the young prince had to learn the Russian language, so difficult for foreigners, within a small period of five months before his trip to Russia, without being able to hear native speakers' conversations, you can easily make conclusions about the outstanding talents of the young man. In my student I found not only a rare talent, but a great amount of diligence.{…} As for Russia, the prince is going to our far away country not only willingly, but I'm not afraid to exaggerate when I say - with enthusiasm. He grew to love Russia as well as the Russian language, obviously being charmed by the expression of royal affection during his first meeting with the Emperor in Darmstadt, which has now found its solemn gracious confirmation in a decree of the Imperial Highness to take the Prince under his high patronage for further education"[8].

Pages, who studies at Corps des Pages, as a rule were recruited from the sons of nobility, high ranking army officers, prominent statesman and foreign royalty. A rigorous system of intensive education was designed to prepare them eventually for entrance into the regiments of the Imperial Guard, for which a final examination result of at least nine points out of twelve was essential. Failing this, demotion to a regiment of the regular army for three years followed, before graduation to the Guards. At the same time, however, it was generally understood, though nowhere explicitly stated, that no student – high marks or not – could aspire to the Guards without sufficient means to maintain an extravagant lifestyle in this most elegant branch of the Service.

In spring 1900, after a hard winter's work, the spring results of both Poum and Chakrabongse were excellent. In fact, as they and two other students gained highest marks, they became eligible for a special award – appointment to the "Pages de la Chambre", or pages-in-waiting to the Emperor and Empress. Chakrabongse was

[7] Hunter, E., and Chakrabongse, N. **Katya and the Prince of Siam.** Thailand: River Books, 1994. P. 31.

[8] Россия-Сиам. 1863-1917. Документы и материалы. Под ред. Басенко Е.В. М.: МИД, 1997. С.96. // Basenko, E. (ed.). **Russia-Siam. 1863-1917. Documents and Materials.** Moscow: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997. P. 96.

appointed to the Dowager Empress, Maria Fyodorovna, and Poum to the Empress Alexandra. But at Chakrabongse's wish they changed places, a change that must have been accomplished with considerable tact as not to have offended the two august ladies. Thus arranged, it was Chakrabongse who attended the Empress at all court functions[9].

Mention must be made about how warmly the Siamese prince was treated by Czar Nicolas II and his family. Here it is important to once again draw attention to the fact that the Czar was extremely reluctant to expanding his close circle of people. English Envoy George Buchanan recalled: "In the privacy of their home, the Czar's imperial family led a simple life, which excluded the possibility for outsiders to penetrate into their happy family circle." Those circumstances are confirmed by the following: "a heavy burden for Nicolas II was the responsibility to communicate with strangers and unfamiliar people and mandatory public appearances while he psychologically gravitated more towards a secluded non-public life". The Czar's diary provides a wealth of evidence to that: "It is easier to work when there is no one around"; "at 12 o-clock gave an audience to the State Council - had to speak again!"[10] Nevertheless, other records can also be found in the Emperor's diary - in January 1906, for example, Chakrabongse repeatedly met with Czar Nicholas II, visiting him on special invitation from the Czar. In his diary on January 20, 1906 the Emperor made the following entry: "In the morning received two reports and took twelve people. Chakrabongse had breakfast, handed me a letter from his father." On January 24, 1906 he writes: "Morning presentations were delayed until the second half of the day. Breakfasted with Marie (*American Ambassador in Russia*), Dmitry (*Dmitry Pavlovich – Grand Duke of Russia*), Chakrabongse and Sasha Vorontsov (*Colonel of the Hussar Regiment*)"[11]. Hence, we may see that Chakrabongse was admitted not only to the Russian court's life, but to the closest entourage of the Emperor and his family.

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[9] Hunter, E., and Chakrabongse, N. Op. cit. P. 34-35.

[10] Ирошников М., Процай Л., Шелаве Ю. Николай II. Последний российский император. СПб., 1992. С. 167.// Iroshnikov M., Procai L., Shelave Y. **Nicolas II. The Last Russian Emperor**. St Peterburg: St Petersburg Publishing, 1992. P.167.

[11] Дневники императора Николая II. Ред. К. Ф. Шацилло. М., 1991 г. С. 298 // **cited from** Пылева А. Итоги и перспективы политического и культурного диалога России и Королевства Таиланд в XIX – нач. XXI вв. Выпускная квалификационная работа IV курса, СПб, 2008. P. 18. // Pyleva, A. **The Results and Future Perspectives of the Political and Cultural Dialogue between Russia and the Kingdom of Siam in the XIX-early XXI Centuries.** B.A. Thesis. Department of History of Southeast Asia. St Petersburg State University, 2008 P. 18.

The idea that the Siamese Prince was quite close to the Imperial Family of Russia can also be proved by his surprisingly emotional reaction to the news of the engagement of the Czar's sister, Grand Duchess Olga, to Prince Peter Alexandrovitch of Oldenburg: "I must say I am sorry for poor Olga, I do not think she has got much of a fiancé. Of course, it is her mother, the Empress-Dowager, who has arranged the marriage to keep Olga here by her side"; "Olga's engagement still troubles me – I hardly know why as I have no business to feel anything about it whatsoever. But I hate to hear of anyone concluding marriage de convenience and therefore feel much sympathy for her"[12].

In early January 1901, Chakrabongse was cheered by the arrival in St Petersburg of his full brother, the Heir-Apparent, Crown Prince Vajiravudh and one of their numerous half-brothers, prince Yugala, on a short visit. Despite the brevity, the three of them organized a theatrical evening, the prime mover, as Hunter E. and Chakrabongse N. think, most probably being the Crown Prince as, later on, when he became a King in 1910, he not only often performed in plays in Bangkok, but wrote many of them himself.

Despite being actively involved in the Court's affairs, Prince Chakrabongse did not fail to note political changes in Russia. In March of 1901, when the Socialist Revolutionary Party, the activities of which was entirely devoted to terrorism, had been formed, he wrote: "Along the Nevsky there was a great excitement as students had announced a day of disturbance and many people went to see it. {…} As far as I know, the students only walked about shouting, but they were charged by the troops, and I heard a Cossack was killed and an officer wounded, and the uproar continued all day and late into the night. The Minister of Public Instruction, shot by a student in the office, has since died and his funeral is tomorrow. More disturbances are expected"[13]. Since then, strikes, sporadic rioting, imprisonment without trial, exile to Siberia and summary executions started in Russia, all added inexorably to the long account that would be "rendered and paid off in tragic reckoning"[14].

In 1903, Chakrabongse and Poum returned to Siam to celebrate their previous promotion as sub-lieutenants and for the King to demonstrate the satisfaction with his

[12] Hunter, E., and Chakrabongse, N. Op. cit. P. 38.
[13] Ibid. P. 39.
[14] Ibid.

son's achievements in Russia. Leaving Siam in January 1904, Chakrabongse and Poum arrived in Singapore in the royal yacht, and boarded the SS Roon, on their way to Russia via Genoa. The Secretary of the Siamese legation in Tokyo was sailing with them and told them that war was imminent between Russian and Japan – information that they first disbelieved. Yet on landing in Genoa, they heard that two Russian warships had already been sunk by the Japanese at Port Arthur.

This conflict – most unpopular in Russia – had support from the circles close to the Czar, who thought that "a small victorious war" would provide diversion from increasing revolutionary unrest. But, as it turned out, the war was a disaster and a great loss of prestige for the Russian army, while the revolutionary atmosphere grew stronger. The repressive Minister of Interior, Pleve had been assassinated in 1904 to be replaced by the more liberal Mirsky. In December 1904, a manifesto promising some form of nation-wide elections was drafted, and the highly charged atmosphere led in 1905 to a general strike of St. Petersburg workers. On Sunday January 9, 1905, around 150.000 workers, with their wives and children, led by the priest Father Gapon marched to the Winter Palace to petition the Czar to grant reforms, only to be met with unprecedented violence and repression with hundreds left dead and wounded. This day received the name of "Bloody Sunday" in Russian history. Hundreds of thousands of workers reacted with solidarity strikes and throughout January St Petersburg was in turmoil.

Meanwhile, amidst this atmosphere of political tension, in the early spring of 1905 Chakrabongse met Ekaterina Desnitskaya – a young Russian girl who caught his eye and was soon to become his wife, Mom Catherine Chakrabongse Na Ayutthaya. They secretly got married in Constantinople, and upon his departure from Russia in 1906 having personally received the high Order of St Andrew from his mentor Czar Nicolas II, Prince Chakrabongse did not disclose his marriage.

Upon the return of his son to Bangkok, despite the many adverse circumstances, King Chulalongkorn wrote Czar Nicolas II a touching letter in which he warmly thanked the Russian monarch for kindness shown to his son: *"Your Majesty, my son Lek brought me your warm letter of 24 January (6 February). You can understand how satisfied I was to read it, because, as you know, nothing brings greater joy to the father than kind words about his child. Your Majesty and the Empress showed kindness to my son, far surpassing anything what I could have hoped for and I am glad that you think*

that he showed himself worthy of it. ... I am touched that you were saddened by his departure. As for the Queen and myself, I can only say that our hearts are filled with gratitude to both You and Her Majesty for your exceptional kindness to our son"[15].

Prince Chakrabongse's experience in Imperial Russia was a significant milestone in the history of Russian-Siamese relations. Prince Chakrabongse, with his usual delicacy, tact and good attitude towards Russia, was a man who managed to further strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two countries. It is not possible to doubt that the idea of sending one of the Siamese princes to study in Russia, the relations with which are of paramount importance for Siam, was more than successful. Prince Chakrabongse graduated with honors from the Corps des Page and the Academy of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces. The Prince then had a significant career in the Hussar regiment of the Imperial Guards and was promoted to the rank of colonel. After his return to Siam, Prince Chakrabongse was awarded the Russian military rank of General of Cavalry. In Siam, the Prince was a member of the Privy Council to King Rama V and VI, Chief of the General Staff of the Royal Siamese Army, Minister of War, and heir presumptive to the Throne. Today, he is now respected as the "Father of the Royal Thai Air Force".

As for Nai Poum, he decided not to leave Russia at all. He was baptized as an Orthodox Christian, married a Russian woman and received citizenship. He was enrolled in the personal guards of Nicolas II, rose to the rank of colonel and was also awarded the Order of St. Andrew. During the First World War, he commanded a cavalry regiment, and after 1917 he emigrated to Paris, where in 1937 he became a secretary of Chakrabongse's former wife, Ekaterina Desnitskaya.

It is also important that the studies of Prince Chakrabongse and Nai Poum in Russia paved the way for other children from Siamese noble families to study in Russian Universities and in the first decade of the XX century, before the Russian revolution struck, several of them were obtaining their education in Russia.

[15] Россия-Сиам. 1863-1917. Документы и материалы. Под ред. Басенко Е.В. М.: МИД, 1997 . С. 196.// Basenko, E. (ed.). **Russia-Siam. 1863-1917. Documents and Materials.** Moscow: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1997. P. 196.

CHAPTER VI

CESSATION OF PERSONAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL FAMILY AND THE ROYAL COURT OF SIAM IN THE EARLY XX CENTURY (1905-1917)

6.1. Russian-Siamese relations facing the vestigial realities of the Russian Empire

In the early XX century there was one event which may have had a great affect on the mentality of the Government of Siam in assessing the role of Russia as one of the great empires. This event was the Russo-Japanese war, which ended with a victory for the imperial Japanese army. Russian defeat in the war not only marked the beginning of the collapse of Russia's autocracy, but also undermined the faith of the Government of Siam in Russia's power on which Siam had pinned her hopes for the future.

6.1.1. Siam's changing perceptions of Russia after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905

At the very end of the XIX century – early XX century, emerging imperialistic countries that appeared in the world arena started to challenge the positions of Great Britain and France in Southeast Asia, including Siam. Russian diplomatic representatives in Siam were quite aware of the new process: "all the troubles between Siam and France benefit Great Britain, strengthening her influence in the region, and also benefit Germany and Japan, the latter expanding her activities in areas neighboring French Indochina"[1].

The Japanese started penetrating Siam spreading the slogans "Asia for Asians", which alarmed Russian diplomats. The Russian diplomat A. Lysakovski wrote in 1902, that Japan viewed Siam as a "favorable place" for the Japanese émigré and as a market for the quickly developing Japanese industries, but he thought that the main reason of the Japanese interest in Siam was "the fear of Russia" and the desire to find an ally who

[1] Документ 102. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М., 1967. С. 210. // Document 102. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М.: Наука, 1967 / Guber, A. (ed.). **The Politics of Capitalist States and the National Liberation Movements in SEA (1871-1917). Documents and Materials.** Moscow: Nauka, 1967. P. 210.

would be able “to attack the unprotected rear of French possessions in Indochina in case of any complications in the Far East”[2]. Eventually Japan found an ally not in Asia, but in Europe, concluding an agreement with Great Britain in 1902.

A.Lysakovski also noted that Japanese officials were trying to secure themselves in the Government apparatus of Siam (out of 130 foreigners serving the Siamese King 12 were Japanese), and acquired a great deal of influence with Siamese political figures (including Prince Dewawongse), who perceived the Japanese as “disinterested and true friends”. Moreover, Russian diplomats saw that “the Japanese had the advantage of being racially similar to the Siamese and professing Buddhism”[3].

With the initiation of the Russo-Japanese war and Russian defeat in Manchuria, the Japanese stock kept rising, and as A.Olarovski wrote in 1904 “apart from the King and two imperial Princes” everybody in Siam became “increasingly fascinated with the Japanese”[4].

At the end of 1905, Russian representatives in Bangkok noted that “recent Japanese success could be explained by the latest political events that boosted Japanese prestige, especially in the eyes of Asian nations”[5]. As the prestige of Japan was rising, the international influence of Russia declined.

When Russia lost the war with Japan, her position in the Siamese court was further weakened. King Chulalongkorn’s sickness and retreat from public affairs must have played its role too[6]. In order to improve the Russian position in Siam, Russian diplomat Olarovski made an effort to reconsider the Russian-Siamese declaration of 1899 and come up with a new version of the bilateral trade agreement, but since Russian policy in the Far East had changed drastically, the Russian government had to postpone the signing of this agreement till later.

Moreover, the Russo-Japanese War was a disaster to the Czar and his government. The Russian armies suffered a series of defeats in the battlefields because they were ill-equipped, badly-armed and poorly trained. The corruption and the inefficiency of the

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[2] Документ 120. Указ. Соч. С. 235. // Document 120. Ibid. P. 235.

[3] Документ 123. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М., 1967. С. 241. // Document 123. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М.: Наука, 1967 / Guber, A. (ed.). **The Politics of Capitalist States and the National Liberation Movements in SEA (1871-1917). Documents and Materials**. Moscow: Nauka, 1967. P. 241.

[4] Документ 124. Указ. Соч. С. 242.. // Document 124. Ibid. P. 242.

[5] Документ 126. Указ. Соч. С. 245. // Document 126. Ibid. P. 245.

[6] Козлова М.Г. Указ. Соч. С. 273. // Kozlova, M.G. Op. cit. P.273.

government were exposed in the conduct of the war. Transportation broke down, bread prices soared up. The Czarist government was totally discredited in the eyes of the Russian people, but the Czar being imbued with the desire to preserve autocracy failed to realize the extent of the revolutionary movement. When Port Arthur fell (the most crushing of the series of defeats in the Far East which determined the outcome of the Russo-Japanese War), discontent reached almost breaking point and Russia was seized by the Revolution of 1905. There was much labor unrest in St. Petersburg due to a rise in prices of food and other daily necessities. When Bloody Sunday, as mentioned by Prince Chakrabongse in his diary, happened on January 9 1905, priest Gapon hoped that the Czar would grant reforms to lessen the discontent of the workers. Gapon's group was followed by a vast (about 150,000) but peaceful and orderly crowd. The crowd, carrying the portraits of the Czar and of the Orthodox saints, assembled on the square in front of the Winter Palace. At this moment, the crowd still thought that they were the children of the Czar who would redress their grievances. But the guards of the Winter Palace fired on the crowd, more than a hundred persons were killed, and several hundreds wounded. After this Bloody Sunday, the Russians lost their age-old faith in the Czar as the great guardian of his people. A wave of strikes by the workers developed that followed Bloody Sunday into a general strike from September 20 to October 30, 1905. The swiftness of the strike surprised the revolutionary parties of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, who were fighting to control the movement. This was the first, greatest, most thoroughly carried out and most successful strike in Russian history. The whole country was paralyzed. The advisers of the Czar saw that the situation was hopeless. Witte, a minister of the Czarist government, persuaded the Czar to grant a constitution on October 30, 1905. The Czar signed a Manifesto promising (a) certain fundamental civil liberties: freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of worship and freedom from arrest; (b) certain political liberties: a broad and general suffrage, calling of an elected Duma with legislative power - no laws would be promulgated without the approval of the Duma. By a stroke of the pen, Russia became a constitutional monarchy.

Even when King Chulalongkorn embarked on his second journey to Europe in 1907 he did not visit Russia because the Russian Czar could not guarantee his safety due to the situation of political unrest that had not yet calmed down after the Revolution of 1905. Nevertheless, the exchange of regular correspondence and intermittent visits between the royal families continued.

In 1906 A.G. Yakovlev, who replaced A. Olarovski as the permanent Russian representative in Siam, received new instructions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stating that from now on his task was only to "observe", as the character of Russian relations with other great powers did not allow Russia to "play an active and independent role in Siam"[7] any more. The new Russian representative was supposed to peacefully resolve all possible conflicts in Siam since peace in the Far Eastern region, including Indochina, was necessary for Russian stability at that moment.

6.1.2. Siam and Russia during the reign of King Vajiravudh

King Vajiravudh succeeded to the Siamese throne in 1910, when his father and a great friend of the Russian Emperor passed away. Nevertheless, the exchange of protocol correspondence and regular contacts between the royal families continued. In 1911, the Russian cruiser Aurora with the Grand Duke Boris Romanov on board visited Siam upon its invitation to take part in the coronation ceremony of the new Siamese King. But the historical value of this visit was tainted by the revolutionary events in China that led to the emergence of the Republic of China and put an end to the old monarchical system. Confusion gripped the royal court of Siam since it was very much concerned about the situation in China. Moreover, due to persistent revolutionary activities in Russia which were hidden behind the façade of imperial grandeur, King Vajiravudh was alarmed by the possibility that similar pattern of events will occur in Russia, where Czar Nicolas II remained a friend of the beloved King Chulalongkorn and King Vajiravudh himself[8].

In 1911, A.G. Planson was sent to Siam to head the Russian legation in Bangkok. Planson raised the question of concluding a new Russian-Siamese trading agreement once again. Being aware of the Siamese desire to cancel all unequal treaties with European powers, Planson suggested that it would be the right time for Russian repudiation of her rights for extraterritoriality in Siam and signing a new kind of agreement with this country "without claiming any territorial compensations", thus

[7] Документ 130. Указ. Соч. С. 251-255. // Document 130. Ibid. P. 251-255.

[8] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 130. / Pakamontri, E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations**. Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007 P. 130.

making favor with the Siamese court and providing moral support in its effort to get rid of those treaties[9]. But the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not want to take any hasty actions on this question and ordered to start negotiations about new terms of the agreement only in September of 1914. This decision was made after the beginning of World War I and did not have any consequences due to the events that followed in Russia.

Since the beginning of *World War I,* Russian diplomats started to be more active in Siam trying to persuade the Kingdom, which remained neutral, to join the war on the side of the Allied Forces. But their efforts had little success since Russia was distracted by political turmoil inside the country and the series of Revolutions of 1917.

After the events of 1905, in spite of the Czar's decrees and declarations, Russia was overripe for more revolutionary movements. A visitor to St Petersburg in those years might easily have missed the deep agony of Russia's peasants and working masses, hidden behind the great palaces and broad boulevards of the capital. But behind this façade lay some grim realities. The liberated serfs – about 98 percent of the population – were sinking in deep poverty since they found themselves helpless victims of bankers and speculators who bought their land and then drove the peasants from it. Being pushed into the cities where they found themselves as miserable in the overcrowded working-class quarters of the cities. Industrialization in Russia, largely financed by foreign capital, came late and gave rise to a few interesting paradoxes. Thus, in spite of the fact that by 1914 Russia ranked fifth among the most industrialized nations in the world, she lagged hopelessly behind the West in such matters as railroads, communications, equipment and industrial education[10]. One of the Czar's principal rationales for risking war with Germany in 1914 was his desire to restore the prestige that Russia had lost amid the debacles of the Russo-Japanese war. Nicolas also sought to foster a greater sense of national unity with a war against a common and ancient

[9] Документ 133-134. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М., 1967. С. 262. // Document 133-134. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М.: Наука, 1967 / Guber, A. (ed.). **The Politics of Capitalist States and the National Liberation Movements in SEA (1871-1917). Documents and Materials**. Moscow: Nauka, 1967. P. 262.

[10] Goldston, R. **The Russian Revolution**. London: Fawcett Books, 1967. P. 67.

enemy. The Russian Empire was an agglomeration of diverse ethnicities that had shown significant signs of disunity in the years before World War I. Nicolas believed in part that the shared peril and tribulation of a foreign war would mitigate the social unrest over the persistent issues of poverty, inequality, and inhuman working conditions. Instead of restoring Russia's political and military standing, World War I led to the horrifying slaughter of Russian troops and military defeats that undermined both the monarchy and society in general to the point of collapse.

The immediate cause of the *February Revolution of 1917* was the collapse of the czarist regime under the gigantic strain of World War I. The underlying cause was the backward economic conditions of the country, which made it unable to sustain the war effort against powerful, industrialized Germany. Russian manpower was virtually inexhaustible. Russian industry, however, lacked the capacity to arm, equip, and supply the approximately 15 million men who were sent to war. Repeated mobilizations, moreover, disrupted industrial and agricultural production. The food supply decreased, and the transportation system became disorganized. In the trenches, the soldiers went hungry and frequently lacked shoes or munitions, sometimes even weapons. Behind the frontlines, goods became scarce, prices skyrocketed, and by the winter of 1917 famine threatened the larger cities. Discontent became rife, and the revolution broke out without definite leadership and formal plans spreading the general strike all around the Russian capital. With the near-total disintegration of military power in the capital, effective civil authority collapsed. The cabinet submitted its resignation to the Czar and proposed a temporary military dictatorship, but Russia's military leaders rejected this course. Nicolas, meanwhile, had been on the front with the soldiers. He was conscious of the fact that the demonstrations were on a massive scale; indeed, he feared for his life and the life of his family. In this time of great trouble in his Empire, Nicolas was moved by at least one deep emotion – love for his wife and family, worrying about the ill health of his son, who suffered from blood disorder hemophilia. So Nicolas had to eventually accept the defeat and abdicated the throne on 13 March 1917, hoping, by this last act of service to his nation (as he stated in his manifesto), to end the disorder and bring unity to Russia. In the wake of this collapse of the 300-year-old Romanov dynasty—Nicolas's brother, to whom he subsequently offered the crown, refused to become Czar unless that was the decision of an elected government, which was formed

from a minority of the Duma's deputies who declared themselves a *Provisional Government*, chaired by Alexander Kerensky.

Since March 1917, the Russian legation in Bangkok was headed by a representative of the new Provisional Government – I.G. Loris-Melikov. His presence and activities in Siam were unofficial in their character since the Siamese court did not recognize the new form of government in Russia. Loris-Melikov strongly urged Prince Chakrabongse, who received his education in Russia and was famous for his devotion to the Russian Imperial family, to provide some assistance in the matter of Siam recognizing the Provisional Government "because of great sympathy and respect of both nations towards each other" [11]. But it can be assumed that Prince Chakrabongse, while in Russia, made a lot of important observations about the inside situation in the country, about the conduct of the Emperor in decisive moments of the Russo-Japanese War or the First Russian Revolution, about the political movements in Russia and about their intentions. All of these observations allowed the leaders of Siam to draw some conclusions. These findings in a paradoxical way contradicted the principles of the old friendship between Russia and Siam. The Siamese court that had created close personal ties with the Russian Imperial family was "staggered by the changes in Russia", and according to Loris-Melikov, "the Siamese monarchy, as the most absolute in the world, was especially repugnant to recognize our revolution that overthrew the dynasty, personal contacts with which were the pillars of the special relationship between Siam and Russia"[12]. After the February Revolution in Russia, the Siamese government still hoped that the monarchy in Russia could be restored: "Now we should believe that the order of things in Russia is far from being stable" – Chakrabongse wrote[13].

[11] Документ 146. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М., 1967. С. 280. // Document 146. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М.: Наука, 1967 / Guber, A. (ed.). **The Politics of Capitalist States and the National Liberation Movements in SEA (1871-1917). Documents and Materials**. Moscow: Nauka, 1967. P. 280.

[12] Козлова М.Г. Указ. Соч. С. 274. // Kozlova, M.G. Op. cit. P.274.

[13] Документ 447. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М., 1967. С. 281. // Document 447. Политика капиталистических держав и национально-освободительные движения в ЮВА (1871-1917). Документы и материалы. Под ред. Губер А.А. М.: Наука, 1967 / Guber, A. (ed.). **The Politics of Capitalist States and the National Liberation Movements in SEA (1871-1917). Documents and Materials**. Moscow: Nauka, 1967. Ibid. P. 281

At the same time, Loris-Melikov also urged Siam to side herself with the Allied Powers in World War I since Siam would greatly benefit from joining the winning party. In May 1917, the King of Siam, Rama VI, finally made a decision that his state will take part in the war on the side of the Entente (Prince Chakrabongse informed Loris-Melikov about it before the King actually issued his edict). Soon Siam formed corps of volunteers to be sent to the front, but by the time the Siamese soldiers arrived in France the war was over. Nevertheless, this decision brought Siam a lot of diplomatic success, because a victory in the war along with other Allied powers enabled the country to take part in the Versailles Peace Conference and become one of the original members of the League of Nations. Thus, Siam became more confident in her political and diplomatic potentials. The active participation of Loris-Melikov in the process of approving this important decision played its role in lifting the prestige of the Provisional Government in the eyes of the Siamese. The last reports from Bangkok were sent by Loris-Melikov not a long time before the October Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 occurred in Russia.

The *October Bolshevik Revolution of 1917* put an end to the hopes of the Siamese about the restoration of monarchical order in Russia and paved the way for the USSR. Loris-Melikov was dismissed by the new Russian government in November (December) 1917, which meant that the new born country was no longer interested in having an envoy in Siam. But it can be clearly seen that notwithstanding these facts, the Siamese government tried to save its relationship with Russia by not evacuating its embassy from St. Petersburg (then Petrograd) after the October Revolution. Siam could not declare its recognition of the Bolshevik government and had to recall the Siamese representative from Petrograd in 1918. The staff of the Embassy was first moved to Vologda, and then farther North to Archangelsk, from where they tried to keep track of the events connected to the life of Nicolas II and his family[14]. Although no official reactions from the Siamese side are documented, it is believed that after the rumors about the assassination of the Imperial family were officially proved, the Siamese embassy was immediately evacuated from Russia in the summer of 1918, which

[14] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 131. / Pakamontri, E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations**. Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007. P.131.

signified the rupture of all diplomatic relations between the countries until they were restored only after World War II.

CHAPTER VII

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

7.1. Analysis

Having stated the hypothesis of my thesis about Russia's active role in the anti-colonial struggle of Siam through personal contacts of the two royal courts, I aimed at finding the answers to two main questions: why did Russia get involved and how significant was the benefit of cooperation with Russia for Siam.

In practical terms, Russia was in no position to become a major or even minor imperialist actor with political or territorial designs on the region of Southeast Asia. The government had very little interest in expanding trade there and the lack of funds hampered the expansion of the consulates and the founding of coaling stations. Russia did have some opportunities to extend political influence in Siam, but given its financial and political limitations would have been foolhardy and unwise to fall into unnecessary conflicts with more powerful rivals in the region, jeopardizing its important observation post. Although Witte's impressive industrial drive in the 1890s enhanced her status as a world power, her imperialism, unlike the British or French, was not based on economic wealth or military strength, or even the need to find markets for plentiful goods. It was shaped by the desire for national prestige and strategic influence with the hope that economic benefits and territorial gains could be won at very little financial or military cost. In northern China, Russia had found some space to maneuver, but Southeast Asia fell within the sphere of British and French influence, and Russia's activities there had to be much more limited[1].

Nevertheless, Russia did find interest in being a protector of Siam and easing the Kingdom's tensions with France and Great Britain. First of all, the diplomatic game played by Russia with her European counterparts did not require monetary expenditure. It was a matter of prestige: of being able to enjoy her power and strong image in her diplomatic maneuvers. It was a matter of prestige of the Czar's "manifest destiny in the East", of supporting his image of a protector. It was a part of the Czar's policy toward Siam, which grew from a personal friendship with the Siamese monarch, with whom the Czar shared views and ideas, whom he has respected since youth. Moreover, Russia was interested in preserving an independent buffer state in the region, through which the

[1] Snow, K. A. The Russian Consulate in Singapore and British Expansion in Southeast Asia (1890-1905)… P. 365.

Empire wanted to keep a finger on the pulse of Southeast Asian affairs. But having traced the history of contacts between Russian Empire and the Kingdom of Siam till their rupture in 1917, it seems that were it not for the Czar's personal intervention and interest in Siam, Russia would not have bothered to take part in Siamese affairs.

As for Siam, in the struggle for independence the Kingdom represented by the ruling elites highlighted several important goals that needed to be fulfilled, which included preserving the status of a buffer state (not a colony of Great Britain or France) and creating personal contacts with courts of European nations to be treated equally and to have an opportunity for balancing the powers.

Among the factors that allowed for Siam to remain independent during the time of colonial rivalry, I would like to highlight the three most important ones. The first one was the situation in world affairs, when European colonial powers that had previously been busy fighting for colonies and threatening the independence of Siam had to face the rise of a powerful and ambitious Germany that was ready to dispute their dominance in Europe. Germany presented a threat not only to neighbouring France, with which they had long-lasting territorial disputes, but also became a competitor to Great Britain in terms of industrial might and even naval power, since Germany intended to create a fleet as powerful as Great Britain's. As Siam already had a bitter experience with aggressive France and colonial Britain, it must have viewed Germans, who started to develop trade with the country, as fairer partners. It gave Siam an opportunity to find a balance of powers and maneuver between the interests of the Great Powers of Europe, who had to seek for a way to come to common terms in many disputes and unite themselves against Germany. Another factor, which is not less significant, was the wisdom of the Siamese monarchs – King Mongkut and King Chulalongkorn. King Mongkut was an extraordinary person with great religious and political education, who managed to psychologically prepare and turn Siamese foreign policy towards the West. By concluding numerous treaties with many European nations he gave his country a chance to gain their attention and an opportunity to use one of the interested nation's "cards" in Thailand's struggle for independence. His son King Chulalongkorn not only inherited his vision in international affairs and launched deep domestic reforms in Siam but also was a person of strong will and impeccable manners, who dared to embark on a journey to meet European leaders and stand for equal treatment for his country. And the third factor that should not be omitted was the help of the Russian Empire, which had been providing support to Siam for almost 11 years of the Siamese colonial struggle –

since 1893/94 till its settlement in 1904, and had a lot of influence in Europe at that time.

Thus, by modernizing society, and learning from the European experience, by analyzing the world geopolitical situation and maneuvering between colonial rivals, Siam managed to win the status of a buffer state. Apart from that, a wise choice of creating a bond with the Russian Empire provided for Siam a key to realizing the concept of a "balance of power", which, in the categorization of all factors in the Siamese anti-colonial struggle, I consider the most important one.

7.2. Conclusion

The establishment of diplomatic relations and cultural contacts, vigorous growth of political ties between the royal dynasties of the Siamese Kingdom and the Russian Empire contributed to the formation of a favorable image of Siam in Russia at the beginning of the XX century. The path of learning about Siam in Russia started with effusive reports by Russian sailors who admired "the marvelous miracle of Siam"[2]. In the early XX century these Siamese realties became a subject of scientific research and cultural and artistic evaluation by Russian scholars. A very secular rational view of the Siamese Kingdom prevailed in the higher circles of the educated Russian audience. The preconceived and unbiased Russian perception of Siam was quite new for the public opinion in Europe at that time. This perception included acknowledging the spiritual values of Buddhist culture and recognizing the possibilities of mutually beneficial cultural influence. Russians envisioned Siam as a peaceful and friendly country which was governed by a remarkably gifted monarch - King Chulalongkorn – and educated elite. Conservative Russians also liked to note that even though the Siamese government was undertaking the policy of modernization in order to avoid colonization and be equally developed as other great nations, it strived to preserve Siamese original culture and national religion. In fact, the new ideology of creating a national Siamese identity, which was promoted by King Chulalongkorn in Siam, was admired by many Russians. It should be said that given the overall low level of education among the ordinary Siamese, the new ideas of King Chulalongkorn were not easy for them to understand. But in such a country as Siam, where the ruling elite controlled all aspects of everyday

[2] Мельниченко Б.Н. Россия и Сиам (Таиланд) // Россия и Восток. СПб, 2002. С. 450. / Melnichenko, B.N. Russia and Siam (Thailand) . In **Russia and the East**. St Petersburg: St Petersburg State University, 2002. P. 450.

life under the supervision of the sovereign, it was enough to spread this ideology among the elite circles in order to make this idea truly national[3]. Among those who belonged to the Siamese elite were numerous members of the Royal court, higher government officials and successful merchants. These aristocrats who were quite open-minded and knowledgeable, and in the case of merchants and government officials often multiethnic in origin, were in charge of the new national ideology which received great respect from the Russian aristocracy. Therefore, while talking about Russian-Siamese relations of that time one should keep in mind their "elite character", a great example of which were friendly ties between the Russian Imperial Family and the Royal Court of Siam that flourished at the beginning of the XX century.

The educated Siamese elite also acquired a certain image of Russia by the beginning of the XX century. In their appraisal of the Russian Empire they distinguished her from other Western powers. The Siamese saw Russia not only as a friend and patron, but also as a model of state and political organization. Thus, for example, at the moment of establishing diplomatic relations between Siam and Russia, both countries were ruled by absolute monarchs, whose authorities were not restricted by constitutions, parliaments or political parties as in the other great powers of the century (in monarchical Germany, Japan, Great Britain or republican France and U.S.). These kinds of "novelties" were rejected by the Siamese King Chulalongkorn who launched great reforms in his country but was not in favor of radically changing monarchical institutions; they were also criticized by his son, King Vachiravudh, who succeeded to the throne in 1910. Similar to Siam, in the early XX century Russia was a predominantly agrarian country that was undergoing a period of rapid industrialization, and thus followed the path that Siam chose for herself as well. Russia was more advanced than Siam in terms of industrial development, and, as it was believed, she also possessed invincible military strength that made her European neighbors respect her

[3] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. Р. 110. / Pakamontri, E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations**. Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007. P. 110.

political interests. Moreover, Siam did not fail to recognize that Russia was also the closest ally of France at that moment.

In 1897 France and Great Britain were aware of the results of the modernization process in Siam, but they were still not ready to recognize Siam as a sovereign national state. The British and French bureaucratic machines needed an impulse to process the new way of thinking about Siam and recognize the equal rights of their "young Asian sister"[4]. The Russian Emperor Nicolas II, who treated King Chulalongkorn in Russia as an equal sovereign in 1897, created such an impulse. Certainly not all the problems were resolved at once in 1897. It required ten more years of political maneuvers, periods of armed confrontations and untiring diplomatic efforts from all the parties involved, including Russia as a mediator and patron of Siam, in order to formulate the final version of the Franco-Siamese agreement in 1907, which removed the threat of colonialism to Siamese independence. In the conflict between Siam and France it is possible to envisage that Russia had attempted to induce both sides to reach a settlement through peaceful means[5]. But it should be acknowledged that throughout this time Siam was quite successful on her way to modernization and came well prepared to join the new world political order that emerged after World War I. This task was failed by the new Russian government that came to power after the fall of the Empire in 1917. As for Siam, it remained independent and avoided becoming a colony; at the end of the World War I it joined the Entente and became an equal member of the Paris Peace Conference and the League of Nations. Thus Siam entered the XX century as a sovereign state, constitutional monarchy and developing country, which unfortunately had to break all her ties with revolutionary Russia.

Back in 1897 King Chulalongkorn and Czar Nicolas laid a foundation for a solid friendship between the Kingdom of Siam and the Russian Empire which was based on mutual understanding, interest and respect and lasted for almost 20 years until 1917-1918. These 20 years marked a great period of cultural exchange and strengthening of personal ties between the Royal and Imperial families, a period of devotion to support, cherish and care for one another in times of troubles. But this friendship was meant to

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[4] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С.113. / Pakamontri ,E. (ed.). **From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations**. Moscow: Royal Thai Embassy in Russia, 2007. P. 113.

[5] วิมลพรรณ ปีตธวัช**ชัย. สมเด็จพระเจ้าบรมวงศ์เธอ กรมพระยาเทวะวงศ์วโรปการ. ความสำพันธ์ระหว่างไทยกับรัสเซีย.** กรุงเทพ: โรงพิมพ์กรุงเทพ (1984), 2547.หน้า 433.

stumble into the bitter realities of the XX century, when the political order of the world was transforming and Russia itself was falling into the turmoil of revolution. By deposing the 300-year old dynasty of Romanovs the Russian Revolution of 1917 overthrew the essence on which the friendship between Siam and Russia rested, creating a void in their relations that lasted almost 30 years.

The revival of democratic Russia prompted growing awareness of the influential role the strong personalities of the last Czar Nicolas II and King Rama V and their personal relationship played in shaping Siamese-Russian relations over a century ago. It is delightful that Thailand, as can be seen from the recent State visit of Queen Sirikit, who followed the footsteps of her grandfather to Russia, still honours and remembers that friendship. I am hopeful that remembrance and a better understanding of the past would help push forward Thai-Russian relations today and in the future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

King Chulalongkorn and Czarevitch Nicolas in the company of Thai and Russian entourage (Thailand, March 1891)[1]

[1] От друга. Сто десятилетие установления таиландо-российских отношений. Под ред. Исон Пакамонтри. Посольство Королевства Таиланд в России. М., 2007. С. 15. / From a friend. Centenary of the Thai-Russian relations. Ed. Isorn Pocmontri Royal Thai Embassy in Russia. Moscow, 2007. P. 15.

Appendix B

King Chulalongkorn and Czar Nicolas II (St Petersburg, July 1897)[2]

[2] Ibid. P. 30.

Appendix C

H.R.H. Prince Chakrabongse and Nai Poum[3]

[3] Ibid. P. 34.

Appendix D

King Rama V[4]

[4] Ibid. P. 1.

Appendix E

Czar Nicolas II[5]

[5] Ibid.

Appendix F

Her Majesty the Queen of Thailand in St Petersburg State University, Russia (July 9, 2007)[6]

[6] http://journal.spbu.ru/2007/12/images/sirikit_us_6148.jpg

Appendix G

His Majesty the King of Thailand and former Russian President Putin V.V. in Thailand[7] *(October 2003)*

[7]http://images.google.ru/imglanding?q=%D0%9F%D1%83%D1%82%D0%B8%D0%BD%20%D0%B2%20%D0%A2%D0%B0%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B5&imgurl=http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d8/Vladimir_Putin_in_Thailand_21-22_October_2003-10.jpg&imgrefurl=http://en.wikipedia.org/

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