

Malaysia's Early Relations with Great Britain from 16th Century to Pre-Independence Era

ABSTRACT

This article analysed the nature of Malaya's early relations with British from the sixteenth century to the pre-independence era. It aims to provide a foundation for comprehending the historical relations between the two before the former's independence from the latter. Using documentary analysis as the research method, a few questions were addressed. Firstly, why and how did the British colonize Malaya? What was the structure of the British colonial government in Malaya in dealing with threats and challenges? And what was the significance of Malaya for the British? To answer these questions, the study focused on three main points. Firstly, it traced back the earliest setting of the British presence from the 16th century until the beginning of the British colonialism in Malaya. Secondly, it analysed the colonial structure of the British in dealing with threats and challenges, and thirdly it evaluated the significance of Malaya for British, especially in sustaining the latter's economy after the World War II. The notable contributions of this study vis-à-vis the existing literature reviews on Malaysia's relations with British are the emphasis on the Malaya's earliest interactions with the British as early as the 16th century, the highlight of Malaya's political and economic situation before gaining independence, and the role played by Malaya in reviving British economy after the World War II. Overall findings, the article discovered that the historical foundation of Malaya-British relations began as early as the 16th century, that British colonialism in Malaya had an effect on the construction and re-construction of Malaya political and economic settings not only materially but also from a non-material impact, and that British-Malaya relations have been one of love-hate relationships from their beginnings with one another are in need of each other.