

HERBERT SPENCER'S CRITIQUE OF COLONIZATION

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ABSTRACT

Decolonization process and national liberation movements were among top characteristics of the 19th century. And Herbert Spencer's political ideas supported these developments strongly. He was one of the major characters of the intellectual life of the Victorian era. Spencer argued that taking property from people have to be accepted an infringement of their natural rights. Moreover, a government cannot undertake to administer the affairs of a colony, it is unjustifiable. Also any expenditure for these purposes puts extra burden on the state, which is against the utilitarian theory of liberalism. The role of a government is to execute the law of equal liberation. He additionally compared militant society and industrial society; criticizing the former for its emphasis on autocracy and complimenting the latter for being conducive to individual liberation. Thus he criticized wars and colonialism, even the British imperialism. But ironically, several of his concepts and ideas were used to justify colonialism.

Keywords: Herbert Spencer, Colonialism, Liberal Law and Ethics, Utilitarianism, Philosophy of Law, Political Philosophy

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the 19th century, because of the influence of the Industrial Revolution on the political, economic and technological conditions but also ethical, sociological and psychological aspects of British society, the philosophers have been concerned about all these fields for reorganizing the society. Thus one of the most significant characteristics of this century was the process of decolonization and national liberation. Spencer, a liberal philosopher who firmly followed early utilitarian ethics¹, was a leading personality in the intellectual life of the Victorian era.

In his early writings, the philosopher has had supported variety of radical causes; particularly on land nationalization, -to the extent how economics should reflect laissez-faire, - and women's rights and their role in society. His first book, *Social Statics: The Conditions Essential to Human Happiness* (1851) deals with the conditions of social order. In 1855, he published his second book, *The Principles of Psychology*, less eminent than his first book. Despite his late health issues he began on a long lasting project, and completed the nine-volume *A System of Synthetic Philosophy* (written through 1862 and 1893) (Spencer, 1904: pp.289-447).²

Spencer believed in a supreme creator for explaining natural principles, but he did not claim any religion as the absolute truth. He believed that the most significant way to gain knowledge was through scientific approach. In his *Synthetic Philosophy*, he defended a systematic relation of his thoughts in biology, sociology, ethics and politics organizing societies as organisms within a progression of evolution similar to the existing species.³ Currently, though, he is generally remembered for his political thoughts mostly for his arguments of natural principles and criticisms of utilitarian positivism and its legal theory.

This paper aims to evaluate the philosopher's concerns about natural individual rights and his views on colonialism and the militant society as situations and settings undermining individual rights. Obviously, he criticized wars and colonialism, even British imperialism. But ironically his ideas were used to justify colonialism. For this reason, in this article, Spencer's critique of colonialism is explained through liberal utilitarian ethics principles.

This study based on discourse and document analysis of Spencer's writings. The analysis and outcomes of the study are inferred from his writings on the critique of colonization and

his theory of rational utilitarian theory that are prepared from:

- Spencer's thoughts on individual natural rights and colonialism,
- His rational utilitarian moral theory,
- His critiques on trade with colonies.

The research questions are designed to understand, explain and contribute to the thoughts of Spencer on colonization: Is colonialism moral? What he does mean by equal freedom principles? What is rational utilitarian moral theory?

II. MAIN FEATURES OF SPENCER'S UTILITARIAN THEORY

Spencer has advanced "rational utilitarian moral theory" vis-a-vis empirical utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill. Spencer says that (Mill and Bentham's) "Empirical" utilitarianism is "unconsciously made" of the "accumulated results of past human experience," ultimately giving way to "rational" utilitarianism which is "determined by the intellect".⁴ In sum, "rational" utilitarianism is intuitional and intellectually deductive rather than empirical. For Spencer, an individual cannot understand the nature of reality in itself; there is one thing fundamentally unknowable, and it is the supreme creator as natural law builder. He means that we can aware of the existence of reality but we can neither comprehend its nature nor have certain knowledge of its characteristics. Spencer thinks that people have rights that can be recognized by "a priori cognition" or "a priori intuition." (Spencer, 1897: p. 40-44)

In fact Spencer's ethical and political works deserves actually extensive study; we will deal with that how Spencer's "liberal" utilitarianism includes principally moral rights about only colonialism in this paper. He was concerned to show how evidences and conclusions of each of the conducts of human being are relevant and naturally affected by the conclusions of the others. Like any moral intuition, equal freedom functions are internalized by societies and, finally, self-consciously are implored. And wherever societies acclaim equal freedom as fundamental principle of justice, welfare benefits and consequently utilitarian liberalism expands.⁵

1 William Sweet, "Herbert Spencer", St. Francis Xavier University, Canada, *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/spencer/>, (17.06.2016).

2 David Duncan. *Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer* (London: Williams & Norgate, 1911), 56-69.

3 Ibid.; Crossman, Ashley, <http://sociology.about.com/od/Profiles/p/Herbert-Spencer.htm> (17.06.2016).

4 Weinstein, David, "Herbert Spencer", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/spencer/>>.

5 Weinstein, David, "Herbert Spencer", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2012), Edward N. Zalta (ed.),<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2012/entries/spencer/>>. (17.06.2016).

It should be realized that most moral philosophers either are concerned only with the consequences of conduct or focus exclusively on motives for action. Yet both the consequences and the grounds of action are of moral significance, and Spencer shows his awareness of this in his theory of rational utilitarianism. Actions should gather benefits but they can do so only if “rationally guided and principled.” (Spencer, 1897: Vol.1, p.9)

About utilitarian system he admits, “The value of the inherited and theologically-enforced code is that it formulates, with some approach to truth, the accumulated results of past human experience.” (Spencer, 1873: p. 186) Again he puts forward that, “...were it possible forthwith to replace the traditionally established system of rules supposed to be supernaturally warranted by a system of rules, rationally elaborated, no such rationally elaborated system of rules would be adequately operated?” (Spencer, 1873: pp. 186-187) Connected with the moral discussions of the century, Spencer defended rational utilitarianism opposing Kant’s deontological ethics and Mill’s utilitarian ethics. But we can discuss about whether personal inclinations and potential actions are always morally thinkable or calculable. Since happiness is just an emotion, it is difficult to formulate sentiments logically. It can’t be measured or quantified. Though similar critiques can be done for Spencer’s thoughts, his arguments still significant for individual rights. Because Spencer interpreted differently from empiric utilitarianism and succeeded being far from measuring, he focuses on revealing natural freedom and turning it into rational benefit for the society and the human being.

Hence Spencer admits, “Causality principles are necessary or that the practical conclusions be drawn from them are even (absolutely) universal.” (Duncan, ed., 1908: 108) And for Spencer, these principles exist in nature and even society is embodied by the Divine Will or if you are an unbeliever it is the manifestation of an Unknowable Power. (Spencer, 1897: Vol.2, p.11) Therefore, he argues that neither we know religious beliefs are true nor (fundamental) religious beliefs are false.

III. INDIVIDUALISM AND EQUAL FREEDOM PRINCIPLE

Spencer advocates rational utilitarianism of particular kinds of actions inevitably fostering general utility or good. These action types create categorical normative ‘laws of conduct.’ They identify the factors of equal freedom to constitute our basic moral rights. For Spencer, ‘rights-oriented utilitarianism’ best provides general human happiness, because

individuals succeed in making themselves happy when they improve their mental and physical abilities by exercising them and this exercise needs wide freedom. According to him, while we live socially, what we fundamentally require is equal freedom. Because liberty secure our most vital opportunities for making ourselves as happy as we possibly can be. To him what characterized the improvement of organisms was the ‘tendency to individuation’. (Spencer, 1851: p. 224) that was related with a natural inclination in beings to practice whatever would preserve their lives. When one examines human beings, this natural inclination can be explained in the characteristic of rational self-interest. Spencer believed that this tendency is a prime motivating factor in human beings in primitive societies, and coming together with this tendency was the threat of violence and war. He continues insisting on his hypothesis and asks:

Could we charge nature with injustice? We might fitly say it is unjust that some should have natural endowments so much lower than others have, and that they should thus be in large measure incapacitated for the battle of life. And if so, what shall we say to the proposal that, being already disadvantaged by having less power, they should be further disadvantaged by having narrower spheres for the exercise of that or those powers? Sympathy might contrariwise urge that, by way of compensation for inherited disabilities, they should have extended opportunities. But, evidently, the least that can be done is to allow them as much freedom as others to make the best of themselves.” (Spencer, 1897: p.100)

Spencer used his idea of social evolutionism to defend main principles such as individualism, laissez faire economics, the abolishment of government infringement by ‘poor laws’, and the general restriction of most governmental interference. Therefore his notion about philanthropy is sometimes misinterpreted. For, after the revolution, the British Empire encountered huge flocks of immigration and the poor people had to be looked after by the state. But the results of the state interruption through the poor laws caused many malicious results in the society. Connected with this reality of the century, Spencer defended that egoism and altruism are coessential for a meaningful life and a perfect society. Though some scholars still evaluate his egoism approach as anti-charity.

Spencer considered a highly different and unique vision on behaviors and its terms. Considering about Spencer’s term “survival of the fittest” is important. Because he was

condemned to be a Social Darwinist who believes that human society should be governed by the principle of “survival of the fittest”. It is understood as the strong, the wealthy and intelligent individuals ought to reproduce themselves and extent their good genetic material to future generations. The weak, the stupid and the poor people ought to be allowed to die out in order that they will do no additional harm in impeding society’s evolutionary progress. But crucially, Spencer was not hostile to charity. Indeed, Spencer defends that egoism and altruism are coessential. Therefore Spencer’s objection is not to charity, but to doing it in such a way that violates the law of equal freedom. The distribution is coercively obtained that mitigates present suffering only at the cost of causing greater suffering in the future through policies (such as poor laws) that causes negligence by protecting people from the costs of their behavior. For the Spencer’s morality theory, pain is a kind of cure.

Cure can come only through affliction. The artificial assuaging of distress by state appliances is a kind of social opium eating, yielding temporary mitigation at the eventual cost of intense misery. (Spencer, 1897:Vol.2, p. 232)

As a result, Spencer’s understanding of egoism and altruism is a system ensuring the prospects of natural rights and compatibility of interests among individuals which should indicate why understanding his ethics along egoistic and altruistic lines makes sense.

IV. THE PRINCIPLE OF LIMITED GOVERNMENT

Since Spencer defended an ‘organic’ theory of society, arguing that the natural growth of an organism required ‘liberty’. This theory allowed him hypothetically to justify individualism and to support the existence of individual human rights. Because of his thought the ‘law of equal freedom’ and his idea of law, the state would be of obligation interfering with it. Thus, he insisted on equal freedom. Spencer saw this analysis of ethics as culminating in the ‘Absolute Ethics’ and he formulated the ‘law of equal freedom’. That means each has freedom to do as s/he will, provided s/he violates not the equal freedom of any one.⁶ For Spencer, ‘liberty’

“is to be measured not by the nature of the government machinery, he lives under but by the relative paucity of the restraints it imposes on him.” (Spencer, 1884: p.28) Therefore, he sought to cancel those laws that coerce and restrict individuals from doing as they see fit. In fact, although Spencer was consistent in his philosophical system, as mentioned before, measuring or calculating of principles are controversial. Because abstract approaches can be accepted as an ideal norms of rational theory, but practicing in reel-politics needs more factual data. For Spencer human being can reach rational potential to see freedom’s utilities. Spencer advocated classic liberalism, because the modern liberalism constitutes a restriction of liberty and that the restriction of liberty, in itself, was evil and to be justified only, where it is necessary to the preservation of liberty. For him, the only function of government was to protect individual rights, which means national security. Besides as an organic structure, the state can cause lack of security by trying to perform other kinds of obligations which are not its priorities or responsibilities. And Spencer insisted that education, religion, economy, and social care for the lazy or poor were not to be undertaken completely by the state. Institutions or individuals as noted above must voluntarily do caring for the weak. Therefore, he supported private and voluntary institutions for the poor. If not, as in the results of the poor law done by British government, it could cause a new kind of slavery. Thus, only purpose or function of government has to be the policing and protection of individual rights that means national security. Additionally, as an organic structure, the state can face insecurity with performing other kinds of obligations rather than its priorities.

Besides, for Spencer, there are essentially two different types of social and formal organizations, militant and industrial. Militant is based on status and industrial is based on contract. The militant organizations generally constitute the first stage of almost every state. Thus, unless the thirty or rather forty years’ peace reached, there cannot be consequent weakening of the militant organization. (Spencer, 1898: vol.2, p. 32-33) He also argues that the people who live under a paternalistic state administration have to inevitably revolt because of their divinely implanted requirements for the purpose of freedom.

But unfortunately, the people living in the states of the Eastern world where tyrannical government is the only system of government known to them, they can only unseat a brutal and malicious despot, and put in his place one who acts probably better and who though still keeps government in a form of despotism. (Spencer, 1851: pp. 84,172, 223) Spencer as a deist, claims that the result is inevitable due to Eastern beliefs, societal traditions, cultural acceptances that never support freedom and individuality. Though their natural inclinations

⁶ Spencer, Library Edition, containing Seven Essays not before republished, and various other Additions (London: Williams and Norgate, 1891); vol. 2, 140 http://oll.libertyfund.org/titles/336#Spencer_0620-02_171, (17.06.2016).

force them to be free, they have no sufficient knowledge and nor even are conscious of the realization of the subsequent target. To Spencer, when human nature is primitive, human decisions and behaviors are bound by herd psychology, after progressing intellectual stage of human evolution, they can achieve individuality. Because he insists that only democratic societies and free citizenships can improve these qualifications and change the governments, voluntarily. He emphasizes that creating efficient practice of the freedoms and opportunities in a society, provides to individuals being educated and socialized so that they have skills to decide well. To fulfill the obligations of democratic citizenship and social responsibilities, individuals need public conducts including capabilities to understand public issues and the temperament to pay attention to them.

V. CRITIQUES OF IMPERIALISM

Spencer's thoughts about imperialism in his essay published in 1902 "Imperialism and Slavery" and in other books are very explicit. Spencer distinctly mentioned that accepting colonial assaults as a mission by is totally selfish and unethical. He puts forward that, "(...) and we English justify our colonial aggressions by saying that the Creator intends the Anglo-Saxon race to people the world! An insatiate lust of conquest transmutes manslaying into a virtue; and, amongst more races than one, implacable revenge has made assassination a duty." (Spencer, 1851: p. 159) Spencer, in his "Imperialism and Slavery" essay, too, defines imperialism and denies its sentiments. He accomplished to manifest inhuman face of colonialism and brave enough to struggle against it. He says, "You shall submit! We are masters and we will make you acknowledge it!" These words definitely the response, which influences the British nation in its dealings with the colonial republics; and this political feeling definitely pervades and demonstrating itself as Imperialism:

that the exercise of mastery inevitably entails on the master himself some form of slavery, more or less pronounced. The uncultured masses, and even the greater part of the cultured, will regard this statement as absurd; and though many who have read history with an eye to essentials rather than trivialities know that this is a paradox in the right sense – that is, true in fact though not seeming true – even they are not fully conscious of the mass of evidence establishing it, and will be all the better for having illustrations

recalled. Let me begin with the earliest and simplest, which well serves to symbolize the whole. (Spencer, 1902)

Spencer gives a simple illustration about a prisoner to symbolize his idea. He makes his notion intelligibly understood through it. "A prisoner with hands tied and a cord round his neck (as suggested by figures in Assyrian bas-reliefs) being led home by his savage conqueror, who intends to make him a slave." And Spencer asks, "The one, you say, is captive and the other free? Are you quite sure the other is free?" (Spencer, 1902) Then he continues to explain the illustration with features of the situation. "He holds one end of the cord, and unless he means to let his captive escape, he must continue to be fastened by keeping hold of the cord in such way that it cannot easily be detached." (Spencer, 1902) As it can be realized, Spencer tries to display making someone slave also ties the master. In the following sentences, he proves the master's position, which is almost the same with the slave's one.

He must be himself tied to the captive while the captive is tied to him. In other ways his activities are impeded and certain burdens are imposed on him. A wild animal crosses the track, and he cannot pursue. If he wishes to drink of the adjacent stream, he must tie up his captive lest advantage be taken of his defenseless position. Moreover he has to provide food for both. In various ways, then, he is no longer completely at liberty; and these ways adumbrate in a simple manner the universal truth that the instrumentalities by which the subordination of others is effected, themselves subordinate the victor, the master, or the ruler. (Spencer, 1902)

Considering the alternative interpretations given to this statement we can say that all kind of racist and colonial applications done by a community is the meaning of easy virtue. He used this notion distinctly to follow utilitarian ethics and its principles of freedom which claims exactly that nobody has a right to command others. Liberty and individuality are the rights given by nature. Considering seriously this matter, it should be understood that any authority should not destroy these two sources. Voluntary cooperation's are useful for society and advantageous to the republic. Obeying any authority by violence or coercive implications never provides actual utilities. Only the power that comes from the consent of the people make it to use legitimate.

Even his objections on forced market implications and its economic advantages were

also completely for defending free market principle. Spencer maintained that, none of the forced market positions could be approved. Forced market in the colonies reduces advantages of naturally economic utilities just obtainable from free market. He opposed coercive and state enforced attempts and considered the importance of competition. Imposing obstacles and taxes on industry means persisting in sacrificing the principles of liberalism and dominating free efforts illegitimately. Such obstacles keep of common wealth and good sense.

And hence, in providing a forced market in the colonies for articles that we should not otherwise be able to dispose of, we really engage a portion of the capital and labour of the country in a less advantageous channel than that into which it would naturally have flowed. And if to the injury we do ourselves by manufacturing goods which we could more economically buy, is added the injury we suffer in pacifying the colonists, by purchasing from them commodities obtainable on better terms elsewhere, we have before us the twofold loss which these much-coveted monopolies entail. (Spencer, 1851: p.188)

Manifestly, for Spencer, commercial intercourse with colonies only brings loss and more evil results. Because of the state management and state funds that bias colonies, ruins the utilitarian benefits. Law and public power must serve their general authority and purpose to protect equal freedom and the liberation rights for the administration of justice. Colonialism is the enemy of individual progress and liberty. He concluded that everyone as human beings must have fundamental rights to liberty and such rights are essential to social evolution.

Thus are we again taught how worthy of all reverence are the injunctions of equity, and how universal is their applicability. Just that commercial intercourse with colonies which may be had without breaking these injunctions, brings gain; whilst just that commercial intercourse which cannot be so had, brings loss. (Spencer, 1851: p.188)

He absolutely means that passing from domestic interests to colonial interests, as British communities and even government still experience nothing but malicious results. (Spencer, 1851: p.190) The general purpose for the administration of justice embodies significant principles. General good represents political equality, personal rights, private property and individualism that provide social and economic values to people and society. These issues

have become the center of Spencer's future work in political philosophy and, specifically, in *The Man versus the State*. Here, Spencer differentiates classical liberalism from the modern liberalism of his century, claiming that was a "new Toryism" the enemy of individual progress and freedom. (Spencer, 1884: p.18) Spencer develops an argument for the assertion that individuals have rights, based on a 'law of life' and 'law of equal freedom'.⁷ He asserts that rights are not instinctively moral, but after the recognition of morality, the rights become binding for every individual.

Spencer put forward his arguments about colonization especially in his first book *Social Statics* part of "Government Colonization". He obviously states that history presents us with evidence that government colonization is accompanied by infinite sufferings, costs and atrocities. "The notion that we secure commercial benefits by legislative connection with colonies is a proved delusion. At best we throw away the whole sum which colonial government costs us; whilst we may, and often do, incur further loss, by establishing an artificial trade." (Spencer, 1851: p.192)

Spencer discussed that taking property from men has to be seen as an infringement of their rights and that a government cannot undertake to administer the affairs of a colony; this is unjustifiable. Also any expenditure for these purposes burdens state extra duties therefore it is against of utilitarian theory of liberalism. The role of a government is to administer the law of equal freedom.

That a government cannot undertake to administer the affairs of a colony, and to support for it a judicial staff, a constabulary, a garrison, and so forth, without trespassing against the parent society, scarcely needs pointing out. Any expenditure for these purposes, be it like our own some three and a half millions sterling a year, or but a few thousands, involves a breach of state-duty. The taking from men property beyond what is needful for the better securing of their rights, we have seen to be an infringement of their rights. Colonial expenditure cannot be met without property being so taken. Colonial expenditure is therefore unjustifiable. (Spencer, 1851: p. 185)

As mentioned above, he defended to follow early/classical guiding liberal principles such as diminishing the range of governmental authority and increasing voluntary cooperation, not coercive regulations in the state legislations, supporting economic freedom. Otherwise

7 Sweet, William, "Spencer, Herbert", <http://www.iep.utm.edu/spencer/#H6>, (16.06.2016).

the mission of the state would become to dictate policies for the actions of citizens. The surest profit goes to the nation if the industry is free and the competition remains in the same market. The most significant aspect of his objections for the paternalist state is the preservation of autonomy. We can see here a potential conflict in practice because the state and society both collectively have the responsibility to raise the autonomy of the individual. The obligation of the state is to ensure security and freedom and the obligation of society is to support the reserves to do this efficiently. The responsibility to promote autonomy is a close related of the responsibility to secure the individual's right to open a civilization. Balancing all the benefits of nature, and the use of the capabilities, without sub-ordination or subjection in history has never been applicable. Therefore at least we know that absolutism is impossible. On the other hand, as an abstract concept and normative approach 'equality' is as equal no-mastery. Nobody is primarily subject to the authority of any other human, and none is obligated to obey the commands of any other person. Everyone is completely free to live as s/he selects and act as s/he selects within the parameters of the moral law.

Subsequently, this is what Herbert Spencer says about colonialism:

Moreover, colonial government, properly so called, cannot be carried on without transgressing the rights of the colonists. For if, as generally happens, the colonists are dictated to by authorities sent out from the mother country, then the law of equal freedom is broken in their persons, as much as by any other kind of autocratic rule. If, again, they are allowed to administer their own affairs, the parent state retaining only a veto-power, there is still injustice in the assumption of greater freedom by the members of the old community than is conceded to those of the new one. And if the new community is as completely self-governed as the old one, then, politically speaking, it is not a colony at all, but a separate nation. (Spencer, 1851: 185)

It is definitely understood from this assertion that Spencer has completely resisted colonialism. According to him if the colonists are permitted to govern their own affairs, while the imperial state holding only a veto-power, there is still injustice in the assumption of greater freedom. And if the colonists are completely self-governed as then, politically speaking, it is not a colony at all, but a separate nation. (Spencer, 1851: 185)

As it is mentioned above, he compared the militant type of society with the industrial type of society and criticized the former one for its authoritarianism and praised the latter

because of its subsidiary to individual freedom. He claimed that under the militant type, the individual is owned by the state like a slave. While the protection of the society is the primary preference, the protection of each member in the society is the secondary. And thus Spencer clearly argued that in a society structured for militant action, the individuality of each member has to be subordinated in life decisions, liberty needs and property rights, that means he is mostly, or completely, owned by the state; but in a society industrially structured, no such subordination of the individual is called for. And Spencer argued that in the business competition, the state should avoid monopolies and develop without extreme tariffs or other government restrictions on free trade. Thus, he condemned wars and colonialism, even British imperialism. However colonialism created huge government bureaucracies though Spencer's discussion for less government as possible.

...by the exertions of governments to secure colonial trade, the absurdity attaching to both differs only in degree. An expenditure of power ridiculously disproportionate to the occasion is their common characteristic. In the one case, as in the other, an unnatural agency is employed to effect what a natural agency would affect as well. Trade is a simple enough thing that will grow up wherever there is room for it. But, according to statesmen, it must be created by gigantic and costly machinery. That trade only is advantageous to a country, which brings in return for what is directly and indirectly given, a greater worth of commodities than could otherwise be obtained. But statesmen recognize no such limit to its benefits." (Spencer, 1851: p.187)

According to him, 'liberty' "is to be measured, not by the nature of the government machinery one lives under but by the relative paucity of the restraints it imposes on him. He entreated to abolish those laws that coerce and restrict individuals from doing what they see fit. Also those laws constitute a restriction of liberty and that the restriction of liberty, in itself, is evil and can be justified only where it is necessary to the preservation of liberty. The only duty of government has to be the policing and protection of individual rights that means national security. Otherwise as an organic structure, the state can cause lack of security by trying to do other kinds of obligations which are not its priorities or responsibilities.

Spencer also remembered especially American colonies and the terrible results to which they caused, the failure of those attempts to profit at the expense of colonies. According to Spencer, England, should deny colonies, and give the right to make goods for themselves; it

would be highly beneficial to the country. Thus, he claimed that if the colonies were constrained to become only England customers and purchasing certain goods from any other country than England, such policies and protected trades have provided many proofs of the policy of injustice. Controlling the economy upon commerce for the political purposes creates disadvantages and the moral law criticizes them as wrong, too. And the political economy that a forced trade with colonies entails loss, the moral law will not permit such a trade to be founded.

Then too came the punishment, the resistance of the settlers, the war of independence, and the hundred and odd millions added to our national burdens!
(Spencer, 1851: p. 28)

For instance, Spencer held that penalties upon loaning by political economy are hurtful, because the law of equal freedom prohibits it as involving an infringement of rights. According to political economy, liberal mechanism is beneficial to the people, rather than harmful to them; being bound by the law of equal freedom forbids all attempts to restrict its use. Therefore he advocated civil liberties under the rule of law with an emphasis on economic freedom.

VI. CRITICAL CONCLUSIONS

We have reached in this paper that Spencer was concerned about mainly individual rights and he viewed colonialism and the militant society as conditions that violate and weaken the social evolution. Also he had a strong anti-statist individualism approach. Therefore, “He believed that social life was an extension of the life of a natural body, and that social ‘organisms’ reflected the same evolutionary principles or laws as biological entities did. The existence of such ‘laws’, then, provides a basis for moral science and for determining how individuals should act and what would constitute human happiness.”⁸ Because of this law, he not only insisted for the freedom of every human and but also opposed the colonialism.

Spencer claimed that justice ought to be considered as respect for natural rights and that not any direct pursuit of the “general good” should be the guide for investigating and determining the sphere of governmental action. This rule requires not only individuals that

they not engage in acts of oppression but also it requires that the government act to intervene against such oppressive actions. And the colonialism is definitely unacceptable assumption in his understanding. We have to take account his position on natural rights, liberty and justice. According to him, human nature is inherently against colonialism.

Because of the problematic historical phases, Spencer’s philosophical understanding must have been misinterpreted and ignored by politicians and most of the contemporary scholars. Taken together, these results clearly show that Spencer defended his ethics not through his evolutionary theory, but to work out the dynamics of an ethical position. And perhaps, one of the most significant aspects of his advocacy in his time is opposing colonialism. Although Herbert Spencer criticized imperialism and colonialism; British history is full of grave colonial practices. Unfortunately, being one of the strongest representatives of liberalism in England, Spencer’s criticism can be considered as an abstract conceptual analysis when evaluated in this respect and from the historical aspect. Indeed, as a political theorist, his philosophical and intellectual deductions were ignored. In my humble assessment’s, it is very unfortunate that for some reasons his political sights were neglected in his time. Two points can be possible about why his thoughts on colonialism were underestimated. First reason may be his ideas were taken as only scientist approaches or secondly we can say that because of British imperial interests, his ideas were seen as inapplicable.

On the other hand, classical liberalism’s main principles are Universalist; still, it must be understood principally as a doctrine and ideology that grew out of a distinctive culture and particular historical circumstances such as even colonialism. While Spencer insisted that the power of government should only encourage and protect the freedom of the individual. In our century, according to modern or later liberalism, the main function of government is to remove barriers that prevent individuals from living freely or from fully achieving their potentials. Such obstacles now include poverty, disease, discrimination, and ignorance too.

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