

3.2.2.3.2.47 The anti-freedom United States

The US likes to project the image of being the land of the free. But as a matter of fact, few countries exert as tight a control over their subjects as does the US.

Few countries in the world control as strictly as the US what their citizens do to their own bodies. And in few countries is it as easy to become entangled unintentionally in criminal justice proceedings. And this is the case because definitely, no other country has as large and detailed a body of laws and regulations.

Freedom is the opposite of this. As Thomas Hobbes famously noted: "Liberty dependeth on the Silence of the law."

Many people don't know that the US has the most criminalizing statutes of any country because they not contained in a single penal code one could buy at a bookshop.

Instead, there are thousands of regulations with criminal implications spread over topics where one at first may not suspect them.

For example, in the US, certain deeds may not be outlawed by themselves, but it may be outlawed to use interstate highways for them, or the US postal services, or US airways, or the Internet which the US treats as an internal network, because US citizens can access information on it, even when the server is in Serbia and the language used is Suaheli.

And through the backdoor, the US legislature imposes severe punishments on deeds that in themselves are not outlawed, just because interstate highways, or the US postal services, or US airways, or the Internet are used.

This is street-smart cheating. In accordance to common legal sense, if a certain deed in itself is not illegal, the use of an interstate highway, or the US postal services, or US airways, or the Internet, in conducting it could only be a minor offense.

If US legislators are of the opinion that a certain behavior ought to be outlawed, then they should pass such a law. But if they do not have the authority to outlaw a behavior in itself because of constitutional limitations, and if they only have the authority to regulate the means that commonly are applied in conducting a certain behavior, then they should only be allowed to impose fines for what by definition only can be a breach of formalities.

The US legal system is out of proportion because lawmakers can always bypass the intents of the constitution by imposing enormous prison terms on the manner in which deeds are conducted that in themselves are not illegal.

The US is a free country in one aspect: Everyone is free to set up a religion, no matter how idiotic its creed.

Apart from that, many of the liberties people are said to enjoy are not genuine. These liberties are restricted from the fringes, and if nothing else can be used for curtailing them, then there always are the tax laws.

A US citizen can no longer break free Henry Miller style by going to France or East Asia. The current trend for US lawmakers is to internationalize US laws. US lawmakers have found appeal in the Libyan or Iranian model, whereby a country's citizen cannot escape the grip of a country's laws by settling abroad. Thus, more and more US laws apply specifically to US citizens abroad while traditionally, the "law of the land" applied to the area over which a country had jurisdiction.

In most US states, the age of consent to engage in a sexual relationship is 18 years. In many European countries, the age of consent is 16. However, US law prohibits US citizens from having sexual relationships abroad with anyone below the age of 18, and a US citizen who has a sexual relationship with a 17 year old in France or Germany may face a lengthy prison term upon returning to the US, even if in his home state, the age of sexual consent also is 17.

It's the Iranian model for extraterritorial jurisdiction: by Iranian law, a person born as Iranian Muslim cannot escape Iranian citizenship or

Iranian law that prohibits a change of religion by settling in, for example, the US and becoming a Christian there.

But conventional wisdom is that Iran will probably not prosecute ex-Iranians who have become US citizens and converted to Christianity, simply because Iranian law enforcement does not have the necessary reach.

On the other hand, an ex-US citizen who has violated, or violates, US extraterritorial laws on sexual conduct with a person below 18 can by no means be sure that the US will not use all the muscle it has to have him stand trial on American soil.

And to be free from US prosecution, everybody has to be careful as for what he uses the Internet for. Because if two men, who both never have been to the US, use the Internet to discuss something that is not illegal in the countries where they are located or in which their passports were issued, they are not safe from being dragged before a US court, as they could still be charged with “using the Internet to conspire to” do something that the US deems contrary to its interests.

The US has a track record for this kind of trickery, and the rest of the world will only be safe from US interference when the US will no longer be powerful enough to interfere. This explains the affinity which is felt by many different camps and many different people around the world who all have different ideologies and different agendas but are united in just one aspect: they resent US meddling in their affairs.