

4. REAGANISM

4.1 Background: homo americanus

What is new about Reagan? Or, in order to express it more precisely, what is new about the Reagan administration, or with the present phase in Washington? Is it not simply what it has always been? Could one not just say that the United States were always expansionist, had always about the same image of the world, was to a large extent the country of the immigrants, even of the refugees? In other words a country where most of those who live there, either themselves or in their family, and not so many generations removed, have some kind of bad experience or negative impressions from other parts of the world so that when these impressions are not only added but even multiplied and then are fed to the "American" (a very dubious expression, they are not even North American, this is something they share with Canadians) as a general image of the world, then they can only conclude that in other countries things are bad, even very bad, and here things are good simply because things are good for me personally? Or even more simply expressed: is it not the old story of capitalist expansionism, "business as usual"?

And then, could one not say that the United States were always the country of optimism, of faith and Progress, even the materialization of that very Idea? Of course Progress is naive from the point of view of European history, particularly Central European history, where the idea would rather be that there is some kind of dark, sinister community of destiny, that war is a law of nature,<sup>1)</sup> with heroes and glories, but also with ruins, inevitably, in its wake. And was it not always the case that the United States was the country of pragmatism, scientific and technological in its orientation, that what works, works well - as long as it functions - without too much moralistic questioning? And as to the relations to nature; had it not always been a question of processing, actually colonization of nature, exploitation of nature? And the same for human beings: the Indians had almost been exterminated, interventionism in neighboring countries (and countries that were not quite neighbors, such as the Philippines)<sup>2)</sup> was not precisely anything new in US history. And competition to the point of social Darwinism was there from the very beginning. Of course, that competition had to obey certain rules and laws, there was a system of "countervailing forces", not only institutionalized in political democracy but also in economic life. But then there was also so much criminality, intranational as well as international, in order to counteract this type of control (such as control against cartels) - in order to make quick profits. And as to God, was not the United States always the country of faith, the country of the Christian god, omnipotent and omniscient, only overshadowed by one other god, the almighty dollar? In other words, was not the United States always the very incorporation, and successfully so, of Western Civilization?

All of this is true and it constitutes the background for any analysis of reaganism. It gives us the texture of the cosmology of American faith in general, of homo americanus. Homo americanus is some kind of homo occidentalis in extremis. Space has a clear center in the west, more particularly in the United States as proven by the impressions brought to the country by the millions and millions of immigrants, as further confirmed by the circumstance that what is American has a tendency to spread radially outwards, to be found all over the world at the same time as the US itself is relatively homogeneous. Time has been equipped with an upward arrow; from being a not too significant colony far away to becoming the mighty center of an economic empire, and finally the military strongest power in the world - although the last statement certainly has to be modified in the light of experiences from Indochina, 1965 - 1975. And as to Knowledge: in few places in the Occident, with the possible exception of the Soviet Union, is science and technology and the scientific and technological revolution (S-T-R as it is called in the Soviet Union) so firmly established as the basis for progress, questioned only by a few, instilling in homo americanus the idea that to any problem there is a scientific/technological solution. And God is over Man, Man is over Woman at least until very recently, some men are over other men and some women are over other women, organized by a combination of race and class and ethnic background and gender, but then also of achievement, in endless competition,<sup>3)</sup> with God and his successor, "the country", on top.

In short, homo americanus was and is a well considered homo occidentalis, not only in his own eyes but also in the eyes of others. Crucial is the lack of historicity of the United States, being the First modern nation<sup>4)</sup> in a certain sense, populated by commoners exterminating the original red population, importing a new black under-class as slaves, using it to establish some kinds of slave society and some kind of feudalism with instant, fake aristocracy on top of it: By and large it remains the same society that it was, partly because it was so far ahead of time when it started, and partly so far behind today, in social terms. In terms of historical time the United States filled a short interval, indeed, compared with the societies it has tried to dominate, in the America's South of Rio Grande, in East and Southeast Asia. Having neither much space differential inside its own territory, nor much time differential in its history, homo americanus may tend to see him/herself as absolute, invariant of time and space, as a prototype for the rest of the world.

And nevertheless the basic assumption of this paper is that with Reagan, here used as a symbol more than as a concrete person, something new has come into the picture. He is not only a homo americanus who lives there on the other side, in the

United States, but a homo americanus in extremis, a homo reaganensis, to put in that way. And by that I mean precisely, a homo americanus in extremis just like homo americanus was and is an extreme version of homo occidentalis. But in order to explore this some remarks are needed to put this in a more concrete geographical and historical perspective.

I think it makes sense to divide the United States in four parts; Northeast, Southeast, Northwest and Southwest. Northeast, that is New England; liberal, civilized, European-in order to express it quite arrogantly - perhaps a little old-fashioned, religiously with a soft Christianity, a part of the United States where European intellectuals immediately feel at home. Here are the most important universities, here it is possible to live just about like in Europe, meaning by that Central and Northern Europe, with the fascination of New York at its center.

Then there is Southeast, that is the South, and the "Deep South" filled with feudal features, filled with those attempts to live some kind of aristocratic life, not only the general class society as found in the United States everywhere, rather some kind of caste society. Still colourful, a complex society, in many regards somewhat similiar to Southern Europe. Christianity is more fundamentalist, but perhaps also more ritualistic, and this is where we find the territory from which the US military in general originates, almost as a caste of warriors.

The Northwest and, and by that I mean what in the United States is called the "Middle West" and in addition to that the North Pacific States, Washington and Oregon; more Scandinavian, Northern European (although there are also many from Eastern Europe) relatively simplistic social structures and human beings, again a more fundamentalist christianity than in Northeast but also religiously relatively simple minded. Basically decent, basically boring.

And then, important in this connection in an effort to understand reaganism is the US Southwest: California<sup>5)</sup>, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and the states to the north of that. Here we have the new territory, this is where Silicon Valley is located, this is the sunbelt, not the snowbelt up there in Northeast. There is expansion, not stagnation and even breakdown as one can find so many places in the Northeast, around the old coal and steel and textile industries. Politically conservative, bordering

on the reactionary, of course with islands of culture where the universities are located, but then the University of California system - to take an example - is exactly like an archipelago, with a campus system not like in Europe where the universities are part of the city, but something marginalized, in the country, partially a side-track for intellectuals. The Christianity found here is extremely fundamentalist, self righteous, apocalyptic, Jesus is coming soon, Armageddon is around the corner, all these signs that can be read on the walls of houses and mountains. A large variety of very anticommunist Christian organizations. Crusading spirit. John Birch society.

My point is that this is where the history of the United States is repeating itself, that the people who live here in the Southwest are also immigrants and also have their anecdotes from their own lives and that of their families. It is working badly up there in the Northeast, that is the country of egg-heads, big government and welfare bums, all of them living on welfare, nobody works; here things are good because I am doing fine, and for that reason "we" should be entitled to governing the country.

And that is precisely what they do: This is the country where Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon and Ronald W. Reagan have their political basis, three important recent presidents. It is certainly not the country from which came Kennedy; that was the Boston aristocracy, a European with a certain French inclination, quite different from his successors. He came from the Northeast, which means that it was symbolically correct when he was killed in 1963, in the Southwest. And from that time - only twenty years ago - the political point of gravity in the United States has moved consistently in that direction. A transformation of major consequences.

Then, a corresponding remark about a changing role of the United States in the world as a whole. I am not talking "about "latter-day capitalism" or a "general breakdown of the system"; in my mind capitalism is as healthy as it ever was. But the point of gravity of capitalism is moving on our earth, from the world Northwest (the First World) to the world Southeast (the Fourth world, Japan and the Mini-Japans, the ASEAN countries, the socialist countries in East Asia, and so on). What is new is that the United States no longer is the uncontroversially leading power in the industrial world, but finds itself in competition with an other industrial giant, not with the countries in the European Community but with Japan and the countries in the wake of Japan.<sup>6)</sup> The point is simply that these new industrial countries produce products with higher quality to lower prices, and that for an impressive range of industrial products. At the same time we certainly also have the best known, most famous conflict in the

world of today; the so-called East-West conflict (actually between the world Northeast and the world Northwest) which has developed as a mutual suicide pact with nuclear weapons, and the so-called North-South conflict (which actually is a conflict between the world Northwest and the world Southwest, the so-called Third World) with an endless succession of interventions, guerrilla mutinies, terrorism and counterterrorism with torture, interventions again, and so on. In short, the United States is no doubt a strong and dangerous country, but is no longer in the position it was after the Second world war, threatened by nobody, lonely up there at the top.<sup>7)</sup> The other superpower also has at its disposal the same kind of weapons, Japan is conquering more and more of the market in and of the United States, and the developing countries are not yielding - only the point of gravity of the conflict system is moving and right now finds itself in Central America (tomorrow South America? Africa?)

In other words, we are dealing here with two important facts of life; the dislocation of the point of gravity in the United States from Northeast to Southwest, and at the same time a dislocation of the point of gravity in the world economy from the world Northwest to the world Southeast. Reaganism is an expression of both of these system changes, and an expression in a very nasty direction, in the direction of an extremism which very well could develop into exterminism.<sup>8)</sup> Of course, these two changes in the location of point of gravity are intimately related to each other. The US Southwest is the part of the US that represents the modern industry and the new initiatives, more capable of taking up the competition with the world Southeast. But at the same time the US Southwest is also a depository of reactionary, selfrighteous, crusading ideologies and movements. To that we now turn.

#### 4.2 Homo reaganensis as homo americanus in extremis

In order to explore this I shall make use of the same analytical framework for Reagan that has been used to analyse civilizations (macrocultures). I myself see Reagan as an ideologist believing that he would just continue the dangerous shift towards first strike postures, but mainly to look more "credible" and "determined".<sup>9)</sup> I have come to see him as an ideologist of major significance because of the strong, fundamentalist Christian element. Hence, let me run the cosmology backwards, start with the latter and ask a question: what is Reagan's relationship to God, what is his image of God?

I think it is useful to conceive of Reagan's conception of god as a Trinity;

Market, God and Democracy, and exactly in that order. More precisely expressed: He believes in the magic of the market-place in a classical sense, with market forces expressing themselves extremely freely, with one very important exception: the free trade doctrine is no longer unconditionally valid. When a country like Japan is more skillful than the United States, then that country has to exercise "voluntary restraint"; and when developing countries can produce something less expensively because labor is extremely inexpensive, then there will also be tariff and non-tariff import limitations.

There is also something very important to add in connection with Reagan's God. It is a very fundamentalist God, not much removed from the Judaic Jahve, a God of revenge and punishment, appearing on the world scene in the shape of the American military as an instrument, and nationally as capital punishment. It is actually interesting to note that more and more frequently (as far as I can observe) the expression "Judeo-Christian" is made use of; emphasizing a linkage between the two which certainly is correct historically. But "Christian-Islamic" is never heard although this might be even more correct historically. The Jews and (the state of Israel) are on the side of Reagan's God; the Muslims (usually referred to as "Muslim fanatics") and the Muslim countries (not to mention one particular country, Iran) are certainly not. In short, that very conception has a front against Islam. Reagan's God also has a clear antisexual inclination, with very narrow limits set for sexuality. In other words, however much Reagan designates Muslims as "Muslim fanatics" in their religious expressions (and also politically) it nevertheless looks as if Reagan is the answer, of the West, to Khomeini, who has some of the same inclination towards revenge and punishment, and with strong norms regulating sexuality.

But then there is also a softer element in Reagan. I think that he really believes in democracy. Or more precisely expressed: he has a faith in elections, in free elections, at least in a certain democratic ritualism. This particular point does not occupy the top trinity position; in that position one finds the market forces. However, as he is of the opinion that most human beings deepest, innermost are homo americanus (and when they are not, then it is because they have been manipulated by evil forces) there is no danger. If elections really are free then people will of their own will select the society where market forces are the most important forces in the society. If they do not they have been brain washed.

Of course, there is not here much new. What is new since Reagan came to power is perhaps above all that it is so clearly expressed. He is not JC for Jesus Christ, but

GC for Great Communicator. Simply because he was an actor he knows how to exercise the role of a communicator better than most. He knows, and the American population also knows, though he was actually only elected by 27 % of the electoral in 1980 (about half made use of their right and among them one half voted for Reagan) that he says what many Americans want to hear.

What is important, now, are the consequences of this clear ideological stance. Obviously it has considerable implications for the conceptualizations of space found in reaganism. The most important element is, of course, that the United States is closer to God than most other countries, and for that reason not only entitled to play a central role; the United States also has this as a duty. The USA appears as God's own country. On coins and bills it is even clearly printed, In God we trust. Reagan is a communicator, Reagan himself is a human being who loves God, who very frequently prays. As an instrument of God this means that the US has the duty of assuming godlike features. And among these are, of course, the duty not only to be omnipotent, but also to be omniscient. In order to be omniscient the country simply has, must have, satellites and spy organisations all over the world, such as FBI, CIA, NSA.<sup>10)</sup> In order to be omnipotent the country simply has to be, in all possible war theatres and in all weapon systems superior; otherwise it would not be omnipotent. There was one gap in all of this; land-based middle range missiles in Europe: the 1979-83 theme - till God got His will. The Soviet "monopoly" was eliminated. <sup>11)</sup>

All of this is related to the circumstance that with this conceptualization of God there will be by implication, a conceptualization of the devil. The devil is the one who rejects all three elements in the reaganesque trinity. The Soviet Union is a socialist country with planning instead of the market, officially atheist, and a dictatorship. That description is correct. There are also countries that reject parts of reaganism; they are, for instance, dictatorships. But then it is also quite clear that the three elements in the Trinity are weighted. Most important is, of course, the acceptance of a market economy, it is very good if in addition they believe in God (as mentioned Jahve is also acceptable as the origin of the Christian god, but not Allah as a deviation, a defect). For that reason Argentina under the military terrorists and gorilas were clearly acceptable because they believed in God. The fact that it was one of the worst regimes the world has seen since hitlerism/stalinism was less important than their "free market system". <sup>12)</sup>

This means that the world has two extreme countries; the Soviet Union which is only black and bad, and in a famous speech by Reagan even defined as the center of evil,<sup>13)</sup> and the United States which, so it seems at least, are only white and good, and for that reason has a very important role to play in world history. Of course, this does not mean that one cannot also in the United States find elements of the devil; people who believe in "big government", people who do not believe in God, and totalitarian forces, communists in a broad sense. It looks as if Reagan himself in his life has had two important traumatic experiences: communists in the trade union of actors who so much wanted to have power, and as he had more success as an actor, Big Government which so much would like to have parts of his income as taxes. In other words, Reagan is himself, in his own life, an embodiment of the experience with the evil, perhaps in a more modest form, but sufficient in order to understand the workings of the devil. To see the Soviet Union as "equal" is simply blasphemy.<sup>14)</sup>

The devil plays a game; domino. He tries, in all parts of the world, to take over countries, and then to initiate chain reactions that could lead to the US and even end in Washington, if the United States is not sufficiently omniscient and omnipotent. And from this very clear conceptualization a very clear policy ensues. It is important to understand how Reagan understands this. In the world there is actually only one enemy; just like Hitler he seems to believe that one should not confuse the population with a complicated enemy image,<sup>15)</sup> what the Germans call Feindbild. "It is the same enemy that we are facing in Grenada and Lebanon", he says <sup>16)</sup> ...not, for instance, 750 million Muslims and 2 billion poor people or 300 million South Americans. It is just, simply, the Soviet Union, or more precisely Moscow or even more precisely Kremlin. Most inhabitants in Moscow and most inhabitants in the Soviet Union are actually homo americanus, perhaps even without knowing it, because they are manipulated by the devil and are in the waiting room of history, waiting for the liberation from inside or from outside. It is interesting in this connection to note that Hitler was at least able, in Mein Kampf, to reflect on his own method, to see it precisely as that, as a method. I doubt that Reagan would have the same level of self-reflection.

So, it is the holy role of the United States to know everything and to exercise punishment where that is justified, in order to liberate people from the workings of the devil. This attitude is rather similar to what could be found during the Crusades between 1095 and 1291 (there were eight of them), partly even enacted in exactly the same part of the world, in West Asia (Lebanon, Palestine). Muslims were the devils



also those days. It looks, however, as if the devil in the meantime has expanded somewhat, and that the United States right now is busy in the Caribbean (Grenada, Cuba), in Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua), in North Africa (Libya, Tschad), in the Arab/Persian Gulf (for oil and also against Iran) and tomorrow perhaps in Korea, South and North, and in the Philippines. The devil is active. It is not so easy to be the instrument of God. One needs quite a lot of money, for that reason budget deficits, even too high interest. For that reason there is now capital capitalism instead of industrial capitalism. For that reason the US is losing more and more of the market, till a collapse may come. No doubt the workings of the devil, even if somewhat indirectly, by forcing the god forces to overextend themselves.

All of this also touches the conceptualization of time. I do not believe that Reagan is an unconditional optimist, he also believes in Armageddon. He believes that Armageddon could come, in that he differs from other presidents of the United States.<sup>17)</sup> They have all been of the opinion that communism is an evil, but that there is another evil that is still worse; a world nuclear holocaust. It looks as if Reagan is of the opinion that one is influenced by the devil if one believes that there is something that could be still worse than communism.<sup>18)</sup> If one enters into negotiations then one has to be prepared for the possibility of making compromises, that is the whole meaning of negotiations. But with the devil one does not make compromises! And when one is not prepared to do so then the negotiations are only a mask, a put-on, only a way in which one tries to conceal the real intentions for naive allies. His intentions are not necessarily to enter into a world war, but to make that war possible and winnable through superiority in weapon systems, at all places and of all kinds. The war could come, perhaps also should come. This is qualitatively new. For that reason I believe that it never was Washington's intention, in Geneva, to arrive at an agreement about middle-range missiles,<sup>19)</sup> and the same applies for the Stockholm conference. They are exercises dutifully engaged in. What one really does, however, is to play with Armageddon. I also think that this could change with a new administration, that there is something here which is specific for reaganism, not tied to the US as such.

How about the epistemology of reaganism? I believe that this epistemology can only be understood when one also understands Trinity. As a means against the devil the military has, of course, the first and most important position; God's exercise of power up to the possibility of desertification (Verwüstung in the sense of the Martin-Luther-Bibel): exterminism with atomic weapons if that should be necessary. Then, of course, there are the market forces, as could be seen so clearly in Grenada. The

occupation powers immediately after the invasion did not only abolish the subsidies for foodstuff for the poorer parts of the population, but also the luxury tax for the richer people so that the market forces could function without any impediments. At the same time it was clearly shown what was understood by democracy: all meetings were immediately prohibited with the exception of meetings that had to do with market and god; in other word for business people and religious meetings. To this could then be added neo-missionarism, for Christianity. I think that christian people - if they are really aggressive - today have an enormous opportunity. They seem to be particularly active in Guatemala these fundamentalist churches, in their exercise of anticommunism, of course supporting the various military forces in Guatemala standing at the top of the exercise of terrorism, against their own people.<sup>20)</sup>

But then comes the contradiction into the system. There is also this honest effort to introduce democracy, through democracy-technology, the technology of elections.<sup>21)</sup> One could say that in this there is a certain fetishism; an election-fetishism. When "free elections" have taken place, then the system is supposed to be in order. But as mentioned above, a "really free" people will be in favor of a policy that also is acceptable to the United States. Homo americanus = homo sapiens normalis; the rest is at best exotic/"ethnic", at worst brainwashed or simply evil.

In this there is a ~~solid~~ nucleus; faith in technology and science. More particularly, a faith in communication-technology and communication-science, and not only as hardware, also as software, and not only with mechanical-electronic engeneering but also with social engeneering. More important than how matters really are are the images; communication is a communication of "image". And here once more the actor role of Reagan is important as embodiment of image making. Reagan plays the role as sheriff, as the one who exercises justice, as the instrument of just punishment, of course with a revolver and with the ideology of the "fast draw" of Wild West, so important because it is clearly a first strike strategy. The combination of technology and exercise of violence is then among us, and Reagan becomes not a ridiculous actor, but an actor who has had exactly the correct roles for his present role as the president closest to God.

In order now to understand the whole image of the world, with god, with persons and nature, all one needs is actually the study of Creation according to the Christian

bible, in other words Genesis. Clearly this points to a four class society. God is on top, omniscient and omnipotent. He has understood everything and created everything. At the bottom is nature, and in between people, divided into two, men and under them women. Where is Reagan himself? - very high up, among the men, as the First in the First nation of the world, in other words quite close to God himself. I believe that he also believes that women actually are a part of nature, and men more divine.<sup>22)</sup> But he has learnt that one does not say such things, for when one says so, or indicates something in that direction, then one is punished, not only with less love, but also with fewer votes from women - the latter possibly being worse. But just as God can do with nature what he wants so does Reagan; he is anti-ecological and, more particularly, anti-ecologist. He believes in social Darwinism, in competition without any kind of social security net. If this nevertheless leads to misery then the remedy would be Christian charity. Whether the system functions or not is not his problem in an empirical sense. The system is just simply correct, and what follows in the wake of that system is also correct. If it may look somewhat disagreeable for some people. But that is their fault, not the system's. Work hard, that is all.

In short, there is a certain consistency to all of this. There is a further elaboration of basic US tenets. Perhaps most important is the clear notion of what constitutes the leading stars for economic, social, political and military action, how world space is organized in terms of good and evil, and the idea that holocaust may not be avoidable, and not necessarily the least of all possible evils. But on top of all of this is the position taken by the "magic of the market", a fundamentalist conceptualization of god, and democracy. Of course, there is nothing wrong in being in favour of democracy. Moreover, anyone is entitled to believe in Christianity. There are also many people around the world who would support Reagan when it comes to his faith in capitalism. But then it should also be said what this all means in practise: it means a focus on economic growth to the exclusion of any concern with poverty and misery at the bottom of society, with equality, with exploitation within and between countries. It is a very limited political agenda, to say the least.

With Reagan the country, the United States have developed a real and complete ideology. Reagan is an ideologist, not in the intellectual sense but in the more important sense that he extremely well understands what the most important metaphores are, right now, for the American people. Of course, that ideology, in a very anti-intellectual country itself has to be anti-intellectual, in a country where intellectuals today, mostly living in the Northeast, are on a side-track and all of them

seem to look at what happens with fear and to some extent also with awe. It is a very collectivist country, the United States, where the individual person seems to have much respect for the majority and where only few people have an inclination towards protest when this protest can be conceived of as being directed not only against the majority but also against the major social structures, against the basis of society.

This is already important to understand: what Reagan says is so clearly compatible with that structure, it is actually only an expression of the forces that are already built into the American structure. For that reason it is also a mistake to assume that it will all disappear the moment Reagan disappears from the political scene. Reaganism is an expression for both tendencies, both for an empire in decline and for the new momentum that takes shape inside the country through the dislocation of the economic and demographic point of gravity. It is so new, and so raw, what is taking place in the American Southwest. It is the mutiny of the periphery of the country against the old center up there in the Northeast. And precisely as a periphery the people have developed a periphery ideology under the sign of reaganism, with absolutist categories of good and evil, white and black, very exaggerated, both a will to power with superiority as the guiding principle, presenting the other side as devil and oneself as perfect, or at least very close to perfection. To militarist capitalism, with its search for (strategic) raw materials and markets has been added a very dangerous ideological element, irreconcilable in its struggle with evil.<sup>23)</sup>

Even the American Southwest is going to lose this type of absolutism with time and develop ideologies more typical of the center, more discrete, more gradualistic, softer, less self-righteous, but certainly still with the aim of maintaining status quo. Reagan, however, is not satisfied with status quo. He wants to change the world so that not only the United States but the world in general, and the United States quite particularly, could become a materialization of his Trinity, steered by market forces, inspired by the Judeo-Christian God with legitimacy of people expressed in free elections backing it all up.

Compare this to all the other categories mentioned above, the categories that many people are concerned with, such as anti-imperialism, anti-neocolonialism, liberation from misery and hunger, the effort to become master of one's own house, the effort to have an egalitarian society, to have a society where fundamental needs, autonomy and equality play a role as important as Reagan's Trinity. All of this does not worry him, and even has a certain connotation of the workings of the devil, because the devil is also talking about such matters. But that makes Reagan's position not only anti-human, but also intellectually rather ridiculous - and - precisely for that reason - it is inconceivable that reaganism will survive for a very long period.

But the question to be put is the following; are we all going to disappear with reaganism, in order to formulate it in a very apocalyptic manner? The question is important because the United States, it seems, has a tendency to engage in an aggressive war about every twenty-four years <sup>24)</sup> and last time was 1965 - in Vietnam (1941 in the Second world war, 1917 in the First world war, end of last century in the Spanish territories, the Philippines and Cuba, and so on). The next time, if one believes in such a rythm, would be 1989----. Of course, I do not see in this any law of nature, I only say that there is a danger, and even more so because the wars of the US were made when Democrates were presidents, and 1989 looks like a year when a Democrat president could come into power. In short, it could very well be that Reagan is a man of many words rather than a man of much actions, which does not mean that the ideology here referred to as reaganism is not extremely dangerous.

#### 4.3 Washington 1984: Democracy and nuclear exterminism

Conclusion: Reaganism is to be taken seriously. Intellectual content is very low, it is tuned to people who are hardly able to follow a sequence of thoughts for more than fifteen minutes<sup>25)</sup> - then it will be interrupted by a commercial. But it is like this in the United States of today, particularly in the Southwest. Perhaps it will not last long; as a map of the world the ideology is too much at odds with reality - like hitlerism and stalinism before it. But Reagan has at his disposal something that they did not have, even worse weapons of extermination. For that reason it is better to take reaganism seriously, and to fight it. Basically this has to be done inside the United States and that would be the only kind of forum for which Reagan would have some kind of respect. All the rest is already infested by the devil, with some exceptions such as Israel, the Polish population, and (with some doubts) Egypt. Great Britain, the country of Madam Thatcher, is probably mainly seen as some type of extension of the United States.

The United Nations can pass any number of resolutions, even the International Court of Justice, without hitting reaganism. Why not? The answer is simple: it is not only because the majority of the members are "communists", "non-christian", and "dictatorships", some of them even with anti-market institutions. It is also because the United Nations tries to do something absolutely unforgivable from the point of view of reaganism: to intersperse itself between the United States and God, or even more seriously: to replace God. That organization has simply not understood its role in the world. It is used by the US sometimes, when the country itself deems appropriate, to communicate to the rest of the world what the state of the world is. But the UN has simply not understood that the US has a monopoly on the legitimate exercise of power in the world, not for any selfish United States

reasons, but simply to set the world right. With the UN's deep lack of understanding of the US mission the only appropriate reaction is actually for the US to leave such a forum, starting with the UNESCO<sup>26)</sup> - a collection of intellectuals with a particularly heavy inclination towards the line of the devil. To be a country, just like the others with no particular claim to be the harbinger of ultimate Truth, is the UN message - but that is certainly not the idea of reaganism. And yet that is the task, it seems, of the US population: to try to redefine themselves as normal.

In doing so the United States has one tremendous advantage denied the people living under hitlerism and stalinism: democracy, one of the best institutions developed by humankind. The US people may change administration, having a chance in 1984, and (hopefully) another in 1988. There are problems, though:

- The voters might prefer Reagan and reaganism. They might simply agree. The present analysis points in that direction: reaganism is not contrary to general americanism as an ideology; it is within the same cosmology only a more extreme version.

-The voters might have their doubts about Reagan, but for the wrong reasons: because he is not so strong in action as in words. To persuade them Reagan might try one more invasion (eg. in Nicaragua). And if he is elected that invasion might also come, having interpreted reelection as a vote of confidence. In either case democracy at home constitutes no guarantee against criminal action abroad, against people with no veto, not even a vote.

- An other administration might not be that different: strategic planning will probably continue the same way, so will armament; business will demand markets and the military "modernization". But the terrifyingly self-righteous and callous ideological element will probably disappear as a guide for action, or at least be very much modified.

In praise of democracy: This gives us a hope. And all of us who - like the present author - are not anti-american but anti-Reagan will refuse to give it up, unless we get very convincing proof that this ideological disease has contaminated the whole country.

unilateralism: we also ask ourselves: Will our country work before nuclear exterminism? Of course that does not only depend on the United States in general, and reaganism in particular. If empirical evidence is a guide an arms race that continues unabated tends to lead to wars when a confrontation between the contestants takes place, somewhere, sometime<sup>(27)</sup>. This gives two ways of counteracting wars: slow the arms race, and/or introduce cold war traffic rules so that the two major contestants, the two superpowers at least do not meet eye to eye, gun to gun, bomb to bomb. As we painfully well know there has been no success in stopping the arms race; disarmament conferences have only been accompanied by some qualitative shift to other weapons systems, and quantitative increases in old and new systems alike. But by and large direct confrontations have been avoided. The confrontations have been indirect, through lesser powers on one or both sides, followed by the treatment suffering referred to, euphemistically, as "local wars"<sup>(28)</sup>. However, the Big, Major war has been avoided, so far.

With reaganism this has changed in the sense of increasing the fear everywhere, and for good reasons. The arms build-up is higher than ever, particularly in the US.<sup>(29)</sup> The confrontations are more numerous and sharp than ever, in various places in Central America, in the Caribbean, in the Chad-Libya complex, in Israel-Lebanon, in the Arab/Persian Gulf, potentially in Korea, the Philippines. And then there are two more factors, particular to reaganism. One has been mentioned: a conflict perspective loaded with irreconciliability, the fight between Good and Evil, seen in win/lose terms, not in terms of accommodation, compromise. "Detente" is no longer a part of the Washington vocabulary.

And the second factor is this: not that there is any proof that Washington prepares a first strike, but it certainly look as if they are doing so. There is the encircling of the Soviet Union with a paralyzing capability of medium-range, land-, sea- and air-based Cruise and Pershing II missiles which, together with intercontinental systems can make a synchronized attack possible. There is the stepped up attempt to wipe out Soviet second strike capability through anti-submarine warfare. There is the search for a laser defense to destroy incoming Soviet missile-

...in civil or semi-civilized countries, and in our own time, it has been  
...admission that a nuclear war, even a big one, is not the worst evil. (30)  
Communism is the worst evil. In other words, if we cannot triumph over communism  
with other means, then total holocaust is preferable - adding, of course, that  
preferable to holocaust on both sides is holocaust on one side only, that of the  
enemy. Or - at least not of the United States.

The old word for nuclear exterminism was Armageddon, actually disturbingly  
similar to the way it is described in Revelation (31). The just and the unjust are  
sorted; the former heading for paradise, the latter for hell. Hitler and Stalin  
had their versions of precisely this sorting process, in the name of the Herrenvolk,  
of History. Reagan would do it in the name of Humanity. And it is not very reas-  
suring to know that one his favorite theological themes is Armageddon is near.