

**T**HAT quadrennial show, the American presidential election, watched with curiosity and concern by the world, has now completed its 1980 performance. The predicted winner, Republican Ronald Reagan, became the winner in fact, against Democratic incumbent Jimmy Carter.

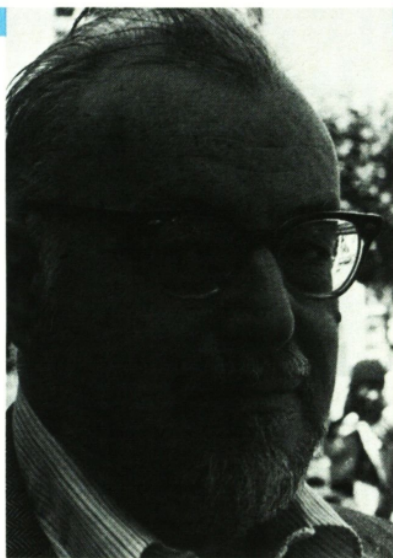
Though this was not surprising, there were some surprises. The voter turnout was heavy despite bad weather in much of the country on Election Day and despite pre-election signs of apathy and discontent over the candidates. The extent of the victory was also a surprise, to winners as well as losers. In a landslide, Reagan took all but five out of fifty states.

Actually, the popular vote was not so extreme: Reagan got 50%, Carter 42%, with 8% going to independent candidate John Anderson and a sprinkling of smaller parties. But because of the peculiar American electoral college system, the "winner take all" results were more extreme. (There are good arguments for reforming this system and moving toward proportional representation. Many voters whose hearts were with smaller parties did not want to "waste their vote", but might have voted their real inclination if there were promise of some representation).

Another surprise was the result of elections to the Senate, which now has a Republican majority for the first time in 26 years. The House of Representatives still maintains a Democratic majority, though narrower.

**W**HAT does this switch mean? Usually voters switch parties in times of trouble and discontent. If there is a crisis or bad economic conditions during a Republican administration, the country goes Democratic (e.g., the Great Depression); and vice versa (e.g., Vietnam in 1968).

This time, America had crises aplenty. There was the energy crisis, compounded by troubles in the Middle East – the hostages in Iran, the USSR in Afghanistan, and Iran-Iraq war, etc. Above all, there was trouble in the economy – infla-



**BOB CLANCY**  
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WRONG!***

tion persisting, a weakened dollar, unemployment high, taxes increasing, continued urban decay, an alarming crime rate, and other troubles.

Rightly or wrongly – most wrongly – the electorate feel the new leader will deal decisively with these matters. Rightly or wrongly – mostly wrongly – the competing candidates woo the workers on the

basis of how they will lick these matters.

This time, the voters turned more conservative, indicating a desire for more stable conditions at home, a stronger stance abroad and more decisive leadership than Carter displayed. The discontent is not usually accompanied by a clear idea of what is to be done. But elections are the only practical way people have of asking for problems to be solved somehow. The U.S. President does wield a lot of power and influence, but he is as unlikely as King Canute to turn back the tide of gigantic forces.

**T**HE WORLD watched this election with mixed feelings, but perhaps the Japanese had the best estimate – that much of what Reagan said was campaign rhetoric and as he moves into office the changes will not be so drastic. In fact, his and Carter's economic programme when spelled out looked remarkably alike. (The same thing happened when Reagan became Governor of California).

Business rejoiced at the victory of Reagan and the stock market shot up. All well and good, but it is not so good that the big oil companies received the news with such glee. However, they would no doubt be the winners no matter who won the election.

In the coming years, our daily lives are not likely to be profoundly changed. An evolution has taken place since 1933 with the government assuming a larger role relatively uninterrupted, and with patchwork measure, while Democrats and Republicans have come and gone, rhetoric notwithstanding.

The real change will come when enough of our thinkers and leaders decide to come to grips with our basic economic problems with a more fundamental analysis, and with just and durable solutions.

**THE REIGNING** Miss World, 18-year-old Miss Kimberley Santos – the Miss Guam entrant at the recent beauty contest in London – is not relying on her good lucks for her fortunes. She will receive £20,000 from world-wide engagements during her year of glamour. But then, she told a Press conference: "I want to become a landlord. I'm going to buy some land on Guam. Some I will use to build a house for myself. As for the rest, I will wait until the value goes up and then sell it."