



Legitimate Discontents

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The argument of the editorial in the *New York Times* of August 13 is that in view of Goldwater's declarations at the conference at Hershey people „will wonder still more whether a man who finds it so difficult to clarify what he really believes can be trusted with the awesome power of the Presidency.” This argument seems to me superficial, and in the long run dangerous, because it is based on the assumption that Goldwater's declarations in Hershey were really clarifications or explanations of his previous statements. The fact is that any good tactician in his place would do precisely what he did—first to win power in the party by appealing to the fanaticism of the right wing, and after he had gotten that far, to make a second step to discount his previous statements, and make statements of a liberal nature which are to win the liberals and those between them and the right wing.

This strategy, was splendidly executed by Hitler, who first won the support of the lower middle class and the right wing nationalists, and after he had made himself available as Chancellor, he then declared that he would not violate the Constitution, that his proceedings would be all legal, that he was for peace, and thus he got Hindenburg to appoint him as Chancellor in the firm conviction that the once wild man had changed his view under the influence of his new responsibilities.

Apart from these disturbing recollections, Goldwater is interesting for the discontents he taps, which should not be taken lightly. There is a widespread feeling among many people who are not necessarily reactionaries, who feel sincerely shocked by the results of a mass society, by the lack of individualism, by lack of any philosophy which is or substitutes for religion. From the standpoint of Johnson's campaign, it might be important if the President did not leave this kind of approach to Goldwater, but on the contrary, if he would make it his own. By that I mean that he should make one or two speeches saying that the country suffers from uniformity, materialism, from the loss of the virtues of individualism and initiative, and so on, and then continue: these dangers can not be overcome by returning to the past or by preaching hate, but by developing the resources of the country to such a point that we overcome the dangers and find our traditional virtues in new forms. Such speeches would do something to take away the issue as one of the great Goldwater assets. If Johnson does not follow this path, there will be many people who see in Goldwater the only one of the two candidates who recog-



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nizes certain dangers and difficulties in our present society, while if Johnson would take up this line of thought, he would not present the picture of a man who only defends the material status quo, but of a man who also has visions about the moral and human future of American society.