

dations and the press, who tend to belittle the industrious, upward-striving lower middle classes. But once again, Republicans have not made the appropriate gestures. Phillips concludes that the G.O.P. has failed to "substitute an articulate indictment of knowledge-sector miscalculations for country club know-nothingness."

The Republican rightward tilt has become so pronounced that it will be very hard for the party to recover its balance. Yet balance is what American politics is all about. After the humiliating 1964 defeat, G.O.P. National Chairman Ray Bliss shrewdly guided the fractious party closer to the political center, thus opening the way for Nixon's victory four years later. Similarly, Democratic National Chairman Robert Strauss helped his party recover from the George McGovern debacle of 1972; he even managed to bring George Wallace and Ted Kennedy together on the same Alabama platform. The question is: Can today's G.O.P. find the center again and recover its status as at least a part-time majority party?

From its beginning the G.O.P. had to struggle to become and remain a majority party; it succeeded when it reached out broadly to many groups and built a durable coalition. It was founded on

an unshakable principle: opposition to slavery. In 1854, in response to Southern attempts to spread the "peculiar institution" westward, a group of dissident Whigs and Democrats met at Ripon, Wis., to form a new party, which they called Republican after the earlier party of Thomas Jefferson. As the fight over slavery intensified, the fledgling party attracted more members, but it needed something beyond the slavery issue alone. As Historian Herbert Agar writes: "No national party in America has room for men who hold one sacred belief to which all else must bow." The

ABRAHAM LINCOLN & SON TAD



G.O.P. became dominant when it put together a coalition embracing many issues, under the leadership of Abraham Lincoln.

Nominated for the presidency in 1860, Lincoln supported programs that would appeal to Easterner and Westerner, farmer and merchant, immigrant and homesteader. The party tried not to alienate a single group outside the

THEODORE ROOSEVELT ADDRESSING CROWD



LIVING WITH THE SCARLET LETTER

Among moderate Republicans, few are more deeply rooted in the party's past—or more anxious about its future—than Maryland Senator Charles McCurdy Mathias. His great-grandfather, Charles Trail, ran for state senator with Abe Lincoln in 1864. His grandfather, Maryland State Senator John Mathias, campaigned beside Teddy Roosevelt in 1912. Mathias himself was a founder of the Wednesday Club of Republican moderates in both the U.S. House and Senate. On the eve of the Kansas City convention, TIME National Political Correspondent Robert Ajemian visited Mathias and reported:

At the dinner table of their white brick home in Chevy Chase, Md., Charles Mathias and his wife Ann were talking about an unhappy afternoon that he had just spent in the Senate. The President had moved to weaken the food stamp program, which Mathias strongly supported. His wife, who is not easily rattled, closed her fist on the table and said: "How much longer can we go on like this? Wouldn't it be better if we changed parties now?"

The Mathiases had discussed that uncomfortable subject many times in the past year. She descends from a long line

of card-carrying Republicans—her father, Robert Bradford, is a former Governor of Massachusetts—but Ann Mathias has accepted the upset of leaving the party. Her husband is finding the decision more difficult.

Whether or not he decides to jump—probably to become an independent—depends largely on what happens at Kansas City. "If the party doesn't try to broaden itself at this convention," he says, "then the moderate Republican has no place to go. How can we stay alive in this party? We're already a vanishing breed."

Without the moderates, Mathias believes, the Republicans will become more and more a splinter party. Senate colleagues like New York's Jacob Javits, New Jersey's Clifford Case, Illinois' Charles Percy and Massachusetts' Ed Brooke—men who win elections in large, industrial, Democratic states—help to keep the G.O.P. a major party with a broad base. If the moderates sink, speculates Mathias with obvious concern, they may drag the two-party system down with them. Some Republicans snort at such a gloomy prediction; they wonder why Mathias has

not cleared out a long time ago.

Mathias often does sound like a Democrat. He regularly opposed Richard Nixon, and has frequently voted to override Gerald Ford's vetoes. Unlike the President, Mathias early favored financial aid to New York City. He seeks national health insurance and is far less restrained than the Administration about attacking unemployment. At the same time, he believes the Democrats have abused the federal role and in the

WALTER BENNETT



MARYLAND SENATOR CHARLES MATHIAS



DWIGHT EISENHOWER ARRIVING IN PARIS



RICHARD NIXON MEETS THE PRESS AFTER WATERGATE (1973)



South as it proposed high tariffs, land grants to railroads, federal aid for river and harbor projects, liberalized naturalization laws and free land in the West for small farmers. "Lincoln searched with superb intelligence," writes Historian Wilfred Binkley, "to discover the point of equilibrium among the conflicting social forces of the nation." It was this ability to deal with many groups under the relentless pressure of civil war that brought the nation through its worst crisis. Lincoln was the Great Emancipator, but he was also the great mediator, and he set an example for subsequent party leaders to follow.

After Lincoln's assassination, power in the party passed to the so-called Radical Republicans, who lacked his

HERBERT HOOVER VISITING PERU

breadth of outlook and were determined to impose a harsh and lasting peace on the South. During the postwar industrial boom, businessmen and the party that sympathized with them were natural allies; a nexus was thus established that would both strengthen and weaken the G.O.P. in years ahead. Businessmen took cruel advantage of the docile Republican Ulysses S. Grant, whose second term was scarred by scandal. Though tainted by its association with the Confederacy, the Democratic Party made a comeback by attacking high tariffs, tight money, and corruption in Government.

The parties were locked in roughly equal combat until the first great political manager, Mark Hanna, broke the grip of the Democratic opposition. An enlightened industrialist who treated la-

process hamstringing the private sector. The Maryland Senator has little trouble defining his brand of moderate Republicanism—even though it involves a sizable reach back into history. His principles are the same, he contends, as those that motivated Teddy Roosevelt's Square Deal.

At 54, Mathias is a relaxed, reflective man with a reputation for one of the finest minds in the Senate. Puffing his pipe, he spoke about what he considered the peril of the Ronald Reagan candidacy: "The conservatives keep agitating for two pure, sharply defined parties. That kind of polarization is wrong. The two parties need a constant dialogue, to watch and challenge and demand things of each other." Then he struck his key point. "That's what the American system is all about: to keep power divided, to prevent a small core from either pole suddenly thrusting its decisions on the country."

The moderates of both parties, says Mathias, provide the crucial bridge between the two. "We're the oddballs of the two-party system, but necessary to make it work." He paused and thought for a moment: "Some days, though, it's almost impossible to stay."

Still, the life of a liberal Republican does not seem all that bad. Mathias is

far freer than the party regulars to vote his own views. The more he is excoriated by his conservative critics, the more he is applauded by independents and Democrats, who have helped elect him six times in a Democratic state. Still, Mathias is often frustrated and lonely. "You always feel a sense of exclusion," he says. "You get an idea, and you know you can't take it far."

Last June his own Maryland Republican delegation booted him off the Platform Committee at Kansas City. "It's a kind of scarlet letter that the liberal Republican has to wear," he shrugs. Two weeks ago, before the Urban League convention in Boston, Mathias was asked what advice he would give the President. When he told the audience the party needed to return to early Republican principles, he was greeted with hoots and jeers. Mathias quickly noted that he was talking about the Square Deal principles of Teddy Roosevelt.

Mathias feels that Ford has crumpled under the Reagan challenge. Last January in the Oval Office, he told Ford he was dropping his own bid for the presidency; at the same time he urged the President to halt his drift to the right. His direct message: "Stop feeding the alligators." Ford's answer: "I understand, just give me more time." Mathias figures that it will now be tough for Ford

to return to the center. Two weeks after his meeting with the President, Eugene McCarthy asked Mathias to run with him on a third-party ticket. Mathias declined the alliance.

As the reports of elephantine collisions plumped out of Kansas City last week, Mathias drove to his family farm in Kabletown, W. Va. It sits on rolling, heavily wooded land near the misty banks of the Shenandoah River. Harper's Ferry, where John Brown made his famous raid, is just down the winding road. Mathias talked about his boyhood, when his father, an influential Republican lawyer, took him to the Oval Office to meet Cal Coolidge, and when Herbert Hoover visited this Blue Ridge farmland as a family guest.

For a moment, Mathias seemed hopeful. "If Ford can survive this bruising experience and come out of the convention with a little independence, it might solve a lot of problems. If it's Reagan, I don't know what I'll do." Then the reality of the situation turned him pessimistic again. "I'm afraid this party has lost its roots. I think this convention is the most important since Lincoln got nominated at the Wigwam in 1860. If the party doesn't reach out, it will die." He stopped, his own past all around him, and said, "Sometimes I think it's already happened."