

# H. L. Hunt: Magnate with Mission

One of Richest Men in Nation, Oilman Aids Right Wing

By DAVID R. JONES

DALLAS.

A septuagenarian with a crown of wispy white hair spread a copy of The Wall Street Journal over the coffee table in his drab office and dumped out the contents of a brown paper bag.

He selected a yellow apple from the brown bread, cheese, raisins and orange drink arrayed before him, and began to peel it. "White sugar is the No. 1 poison, white flour the No. 2 poison, and saturated fats the No. 3 poison," he stated.

The author of this pronouncement was Haroldson Lafayette Hunt, the Texas oilman. At 75 Mr. Hunt is one of the richest men in the United States. He has also begun to assume an imposing and controversial role on the American political scene.

Will Mr. Hunt pour large sums into the Presidential campaign of Senator Barry Goldwater with whom he shares strong philosophic ties? Will he remain loyal to President Johnson, a fellow Texan and long-time friend of the oil industry? Did Mr. Hunt play a part in the abortive Presidential campaign of Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama? Is Mr. Hunt a "fascist" as some critics contend, or a true patriot as his friends picture him?

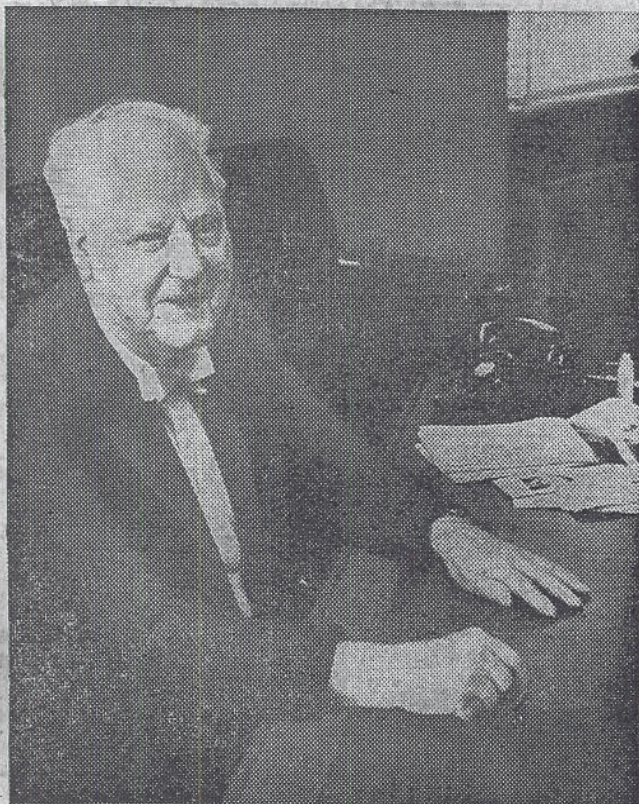
The answers to these questions are not always easy to come by. But Mr. Hunt has addressed himself to these and a wide range of other matters in five frank conversations over the last few months.

Mr. Hunt's views have particular pertinence these days. Interest in his political role has been revived by the surge of conservative thinking that led to Senator Goldwater's nomination.

Mr. Hunt expects to attend the Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City this month, as is his habit. Last month, while boosting Mr. Goldwater at the Republican National Convention, he also was on the telephone trying to get Governor Wallace to drop his Presidential bid.

Always a political realist who

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The New York Times (by David R. Jones)

H. L. Hunt, the Texas oil millionaire, at his Dallas office

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doesn't like to bet on a losing cause, Mr. Hunt observed: "I think that Wallace is a very able man and a very good man, but I don't think well of third party movements." He expects Senator Goldwater to get at least four out of every six votes that would have gone to the Governor.

Few men would appear less likely to get embroiled in national political controversy than the soft-spoken Mr. Hunt. He is a shy, sentimental and unassuming man who was born on a farm, reared in the West, and still feels close to the land. He loves his country, and would like to see it retain the simple ways of the past.

Passage of time has bowed his 6-foot, 200-pound frame, and his blunt personality has mellowed with the years. But Mr. Hunt's eyes still twinkle. And he has kept his individuality.

He can be moody, exuding Southern charm one moment and flashing sharply the next. And he still possesses the shrewd and realistic mind, encyclopedic memory, restless nature, and gambler's instincts that have made him one of the world's foremost business titans.

His riches came from fabulous success in the oil business, through which he has built a family fortune estimated at about \$700 million or higher. "Everything I do, I do for a profit," he once said.

Fears Loss to Reds

The controversy enveloping Mr. Hunt stems from efforts to spread his right-wing political views. He is the moving force behind Life Line, a daily radio program beamed to millions of Americans.

Mr. Hunt has a passionate conviction that the free world is steadily losing out to Socialism and Communism, and that he must save America's freedom. "I am of the opinion that the way we are going now, we will lose our freedom," he says.

One of the nation's largest landowners, Mr. Hunt is a strong defender of property rights. He is a militant anti-Communist who feels that Red conspirators lurk in the schools, churches, government and other American institutions.

Writes a Constitution

Mr. Hunt's ideal of government is presented in "Alpaca," a 50-cent paperback privately printed in 1960. There he sets forth, a utopian constitution for a mythical land. The constitution would give greater voting power to the wealthy. Bonus votes would go to those who waive government benefits.

Mr. Hunt is working on another book, "Yourtopia," which he says will have an even better constitution. It will give added voting power for high scholastic ranking, although not for formal education. Mr. Hunt only attended five grades, but recalls that he ranked second highest on a diploma examination.

Mr. Hunt believes that his life shows "I don't have a conservative hair in my head." The

word "conservative" engenders the concept of "old-fashioned mossbackism" and—prefers to call his philosophy "constructivism." "You can never be accused of being too constructive," he says.

Mr. Hunt lumps liberals, Socialists and Communists together as what he calls the "Mistaken." The "line should be drawn between 'Patriots' and 'Mistaken' and 'The Mistaken' can be spoken of with complete disapproval," he once wrote. "Do not bother to define what you mean by 'The Mistaken' and if required to do so simply say the Mistaken are those in opposition to the Patriots, whatever the form their opposition takes."

Warns on Infiltration

The "Mistaken" have "wormed themselves into control" of large charitable foundations, infiltrated "many great private fortunes," are "in control of nearly all of the big money in the United States," and have infiltrated large corporations.

Mr. Hunt wrote an associate in 1959 that the "big money" in the United States gets "pink" through "the conspiracy—placing nurses with babies who will inherit wealth, governesses, tutors. It can be through Mistaken playmates, classmates or teachers skillfully working at the job. It can be through conspiracy planned marriages, and for those not available for marriage, lovers. The Mistaken will not overlook the proper approach to win the senile."

The "last successful Presidential administration" was turned in by Calvin Coolidge, Mr. Hunt says, adding that Herbert Hoover's administration showed some socialistic tendencies.

Mr. Hunt is disturbed by the State Department (it "has already issued a blueprint for surrendering our sovereignty"), disarmament ("how would we exist among the hundreds of millions of people who would have arms to destroy us?"), and the United Nations ("it's as bad as it could possibly be").

He speaks with disdain of the Supreme Court, Chief Justice Earl Warren, budget deficits, and the growth of Federal Government.

Mr. Hunt stands, instead, for such things as stronger armaments, a stiffer policy against Communism, "whatever it takes to remove Castro from power in Cuba," and withdrawal from the United Nations—unless the United States receives "a greater vote in the General Assembly than small heathen nations."

Mr. Hunt's opponents contend that a wealthy man with such strong views must spend large sums to back political candidates. There are common rumors in Texas, for instance, that Mr. Hunt spent \$150,000 to support General of the Army Douglas MacArthur for the 1952 Republican Presidential nomination, \$100,000 to back the Kennedy-Johnson ticket in 1960, and a wad of money to support the candidacy of Governor Wallace.

There is no solid evidence to support these rumors. Mr. Hunt denies them. The fact seems to be that he is not a big contributor. Mr. Hunt admits contributing up to \$5,000 or so to each of perhaps 100 candidates over the years, including Senator Goldwater in 1952. But he says he stopped contributing around 1958.

#### G.O.P. Aide Not Hopeful

Peter O'Donnell, Texas Republican chairman and an early Goldwater backer, says he has tried unsuccessfully for six years to get contributions from Mr. Hunt, and "based on our past experience, I don't expect any" this year. Members of the Hunt family, who do contribute, lament that Mr. Hunt does not.

"He has all this money that could be employed by the right wing, and it isn't being used," says one Goldwater backer here. "Believe me, there's no deep, dark plot by a billionaire, flooding the coffers with money."

One of Mr. Hunt's four sons says his father makes no contributions because "90 per cent of the people he would support wouldn't be elected," and 75 per cent of those elected would have to become liberals to get elected again.

"I feel public affairs education—freedom education—is vastly more important than political action," Mr. Hunt states. Mr. Hunt seeks to educate

people to "make the right choices." His effort centers on Life Line, his daily radio program. The 15-minute show is heard from five to seven times a week on 311 stations, and twice daily on 40 others, in 46 states. It is produced by Life Line Foundation Inc., a tax-exempt religious-patriotic foundation.

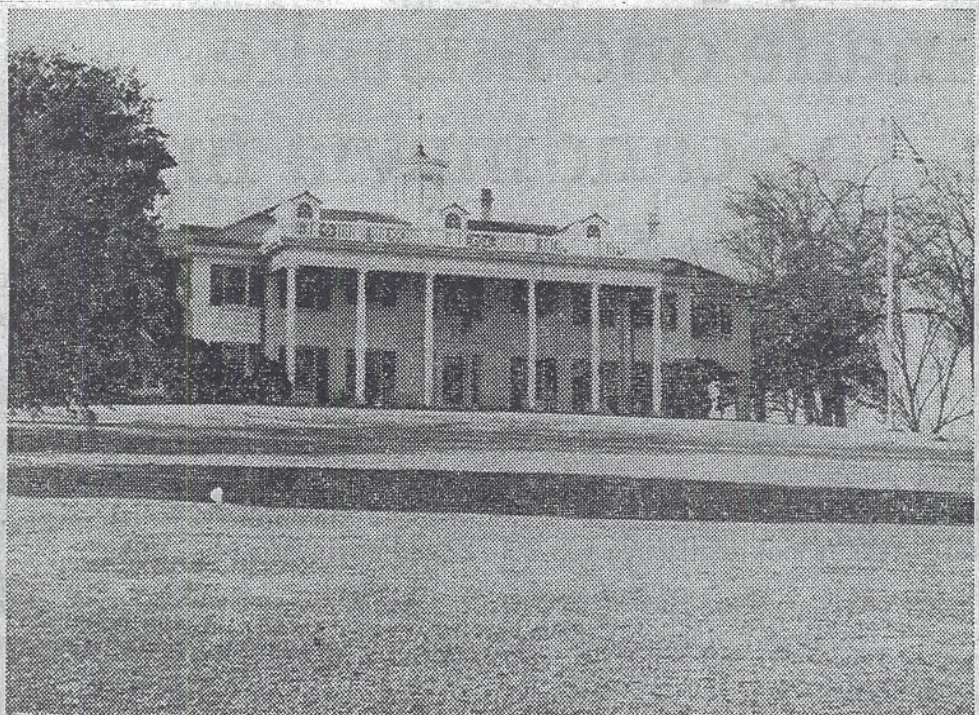
Life Line receives about 100 hours of radio time daily, or about \$2 million of air time annually. Officials figure it has 5 million listeners.

The foundation charges stations 20 per cent of the amount they get from the show's local sponsors, sells radio transcripts to about 18,000 subscribers, and publishes a thrice-weekly conservative newsletter, "Life Lines," for 16,000 subscribers. This brought Life Line \$506,828 total income, and a \$61,378 profit, in the fiscal year ended last Sept. 30.

The foundation headquarters is in Washington, where a staff of about 25 works. But the real power lies in Mr. Hunt's unpretentious seventh floor corner Dallas office—which sports a threadbare rug, cracked leather furniture and lacks a name on the door. Mr. Hunt spends most of his waking hours promoting Life Line, and even has an ad for it painted on his mailbox at home.

#### His Concern Sponsors Show

Life Line claims nearly 300 sponsors, a number of which are banks and other businesses. More than half the Life Line air time is purchased by HLH Products, a food processing division of the Hunt Oil Company. The food company spends about \$100,000 a month advertising on the program.



H. L. Hunt's 14-room house is modeled after Mount Vernon, George Washington's home, and so named. Mr. Hunt, one of country's richest men, bought house in 1937 for \$60,000.



Mr. Hunt's mailbox advertises Life Line, his daily radio program, with which he seeks to help people "make the right decisions."



Mr. and Mrs. Hunt in front of center hall stairway. Mr. Hunt, 75, is estimated to have a fortune of \$700 million.

Mr. Hunt believes businessmen can help save freedom by allocating more advertising dollars to patriotic programs.

In 1960, he set up HLH Products and has been using Life Line as its major advertising medium. While the company is losing money, friends say he hopes to use it to show that "patriotic advertising is profitable."

Mr. Hunt's critics contend that Life Line is a tax-free forum from which the oilman may trumpet ultra-conservative philosophy. They have repeatedly urged the Internal Revenue Service to withdraw its tax exemption. But the agency has not acted.

"There is probably no one who gets more radical right-

wing propaganda value for his tax-exempt dollar than Haroldson Lafayette Hunt," Senator Maurine Neuberger, the Oregon Democrat, has charged.

Mr. Hunt and Life Line have been accused of being anti-Negro, anti-Jewish, anti-Roman Catholic and antiunion. Mr. Hunt has enjoined Life Line from criticizing minority groups or unions. He says he does not believe any of them represent a threat to American society.

#### 1960 Sermon Recalled

During 1960, however, Mr. Hunt financed distribution of 102,000 copies of an anti-

Catholic sermon by Dr. W. A. Criswell, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas and a close friend, attacking John F. Kennedy because of his religion. Mr. Hunt says this was all a mistake.

Mr. Hunt in 1959 wrote a Life Line associate that it "is completely inadvisable that Life Line string along with a white supremacy group, but Life Line would not want to declare war on them or espouse the opposition to a white supremacy group. Life Line is not anti-Semitic, but inasmuch as there will be practically no Jews who fail to fight Life Line, Life Line is not due to

The New York Times

carry the torch for them."

Not content with trying to "save freedom" only through Life Line, Mr. Hunt has proposed other schemes.

"We should never go to sleep at night without knowing we have spent 10 or more minutes that day in the cause of Freedom," says a leaflet put out by his office.

Mr. Hunt constantly urges people to fly the American flag, and "start a hobby of saving freedom."

Life Line was organized in September, 1958, as the successor by a charter amendment to Facts Forum, Inc., an earlier tax-exempt foundation backed by Mr. Hunt.

Mr. Hunt, after spending \$3.5 million on Facts Forum, folded the venture in November, 1956, without explanation.

Mr. Hunt is a registered Democrat, but he has no party loyalties. He casts his lot with the more conservative members of each party. As an oilman, the depletion allowance sometimes overrides his philosophic considerations.

The first time Mr. Hunt gained national attention for his political activities was in 1952, when he strongly backed General MacArthur for the Republican Presidential nomination.

Mr. Hunt finally supported President Dwight D. Eisenhower during the 1952 and 1956 elections, but not very enthusiastically.

"All he has is a grin—a salt of the earth manner and a grin," grumbles Mr. Hunt. "He really doesn't know what things are all about." General Eisenhower, he now believes, "did the most harm and was the worst of Presidents."

**Backed Johnson in 1960**

In 1960, Mr. Hunt decided to back Senator Lyndon B. Johnson largely because of his record of protecting the oil depletion allowance. Mr. Hunt went to the Democratic National Convention that year and worked for Mr. Johnson.

When Mr. Johnson finally took the Vice-Presidential nomination behind John F. Kennedy, Mr. Hunt stuck with Mr. Johnson and the Democrats.

This year, Mr. Hunt is philosophically and emotionally — if not financially—in the Goldwater camp. He returned home from the Republican National Convention in San Francisco, where he distributed pro-Goldwater literature, wearing a Goldwater button. He told reporters then that he had not decided whether he would become a large Goldwater contributor.

Senator Goldwater is probably the first Presidential candidate since General MacArthur about whom Mr. Hunt could be really enthusiastic. This could prompt him to make a large contribution. But Goldwater people in Washington say they have not received any check from the oilman.

Mr. Hunt communicated with the Senator shortly after his nomination. The Senator responded within a couple days that he was "grateful for your generous expression of sup-

port," and expressed confidence that "the cause we believe in will prevail at the polls."

Leaflets around the Hunt Oil offices promote two pro-Goldwater books that are being distributed by John Birch Society members. They are "A Choice Not an Echo," by Phyllis Schlafly, and "None Dare Call It Treason," by John A. Stormer, a Missouri Republican. Other leaflets are promoting anti-Johnson books, including "A Texan Looks at Lyndon," by J. Evetts Haley.

**Friendly With Johnson**

Mr. Hunt has been friendly with Mr. Johnson for several years and he bristles at the suggestion that he has made up his mind to support Mr. Goldwater. Booth Mooney, Hunt Oil's public relations man in Washington, was an executive assistant to Mr. Johnson from 1953 to 1958. He wrote Mr. Johnson's authorized biography, "The Lyndon Johnson Story," in 1956 and updated it this year.

Mr. Mooney left Mr. Johnson to take the Hunt Oil job when Life Line started in 1958.

Friends say Mr. Hunt finds it hard to break away publicly from Mr. Johnson because the President for years was such a staunch friend of the oil industry. But Mr. Hunt says Mr. Johnson has "made terrible mistakes" as President, including the selection of Chief Justice Warren to head the inquiry into President Kennedy's assassination.

The Republican ticket "is a good ticket," Mr. Hunt says, but he insists he wants "to see how it handles itself." He believes Mr. Goldwater "votes right," but seems to have doubts about the Senator's judgment.

**A Tactical Error**

Mr. Hunt thinks Senator Goldwater erred in saying that "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice," but only because it further alienated Republican moderates and liberals. "It goes without saying that he was right" about extremism, Mr. Hunt declares. Life Line has said: "Extreme patriotism is the constructive answer to the mistaken plot to kill freedom everywhere."

Mr. Hunt's "dream" Presidential ticket would be Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia and Senator Frank J. Lausche of Ohio for the Democratic nominations and Senator Roman L. Hruska of Nebraska and Senator Bourke B. Hickenlooper of Iowa for the Republican nominations.

Mr. Hunt lists among those Americans whom he admires as patriots Gen. Robert E. Wood, former chairman of Sears Roebuck & Co., a member of the Life Line advisory board, and a strong Goldwater supporter; Gen. A. C. Wedemeyer, former chief of staff to Chiang Kai-shek, once a member of the John Birch Society advisory committee, and a Life Line advisory board member; Robert H. W. Welch Jr., founder of the John Birch Society; Maj. Gen. Edwin A. Walker, the ultra-conservative former military officer; Governor Wallace, Senator Goldwater and President Johnson.

Mr. Hunt says he has met Mr. Welch and talked with him by telephone. But he says he

is not a member of the John Birch Society and never has attended its meetings. He believes Mr. Welch "knows a great deal about the Communist conspiracy."

Mr. Hunt has been attacked so often, and so bitterly, that he has come to expect it. "I know that anyone who is against communism is going to be discredited," he says. But he still finds it tough to take. "I don't want to be smeared," he emphasizes. "I don't mind a little bit at a time, but I don't like it all the time."

"I believe there is no foundation whatsoever for a suggestion that I am connected with, or have any enthusiasm for, fascism or a fascist movement," Mr. Hunt says. "The fact that I am for freedom and opposed to communism is no evidence that I am for fascism and socialism. Fascism is socialism and as far left of center as communism, and both constitute a form of tyranny. I have always opposed tyranny."

"You haven't asked me yet if I'm financing the Black Muslims," Mr. Hunt says wryly. "All over the country they're saying I am. So I want to be asked that."

His answer: "No, it's not true. I don't know anything about them, except that they're a bad Negro group."

Mr. Hunt's political thinking spills over into other members of the family. This is particularly true in the case of Albert G. Hill, his son-in-law, who is a Republican contributor and ardent Goldwater backer.

**Plenty of Tracts**

Mr. Hill's office one day recently was overflowing with right-wing literature.

The literature included a booklet, "Nelson Rockefeller, The International Socialist," by Kent and Phoebe Courtney, active ultra-conservatives. It attacked the Council on Foreign Relations, Mr. Rockefeller, and indirectly Richard M. Nixon, Thomas E. Dewey, Henry Cabot Lodge, Harold E. Stassen and Senator Jacob J. Javits.

Mr. Hunt is a frugal man who does not parade his riches. He habitually wears a rumpled blue suit, a blue shirt, and a clip-on bow tie. He drives himself to work. At home, his pleasures consist of listening to Life Line on an old radio at the dinner table, and spending quiet evenings with his family, which frequently gathers to sing patriotic songs.

"He gets up in the morning and wonders how the country is," observes a friend. "Obviously he's not a materialist. Some people retire to St. Petersburg, Fla., and play shuffleboard. His hobby is patriotism."

Perhaps his only luxury, and a modest one for a man of his means, is the 14-room Dallas home he bought for about \$60,000 in 1937. Patterned after George Washington's Mount Vernon, the large white frame house sits on a 10-acre hilltop

overlooking White Rock Lake on the edge of the city.

Mr. Hunt, who still likes to think of himself as a farmer, has always been interested in food and is a faddist. He insists on bread milled at home from wheat grown in Deaf Smith County, because of its high fluoride content. He drinks goat milk from animals reared at home. And he carries his lunch to work in order to get the foods he wants.

Last Christmas, members of the family gave Mr. Hunt 50 brown bags marked "H. L. Hunt gourmet lunch." He faithfully uses them and, says one son, "I'll bet he saves the bags, too."