Portrait of a Super-Patriot . . . . Robert G. Sherrill

It has become something of a game with newspapers and magazines to guess whether Haroldson Lafayette Hunt or his oil peer J. Paul Getty is America's richest citizen. Six years ago The New York Times Magazine rated Hunt number one. Then Fortune and Life promoted Getty. That rating lasted until three years ago when True jumped Hunt to the top again, quoting Getty with the modest disclaimer: "The corporations in which I own shares are rich enterprises, but I am not wealthy. They hold the property. They control me. In terms of extraordinary, independent wealth, there is only one man, H. L. Hunt."

Hunt and his sons rule their oil empire as individual men, not even as a family, and most certainly without a board of directors.

People like to talk about the wealth of Hunt. It satisfies whatever need it is that "the mostest" stories satisfy — the impulse that creates folk heroes out of the biggest sinners. A current joke going around in Texas is this: Reporter: "Mr. Hunt, your son Lamar has lost $1 million a year supporting his professional football team. Doesn't this worry you?" Mr. Hunt: "Certainly it worries me. At that rate Lamar will be broke in 250 years." Hunt encourages this kind of humor, for reasons all too pathetically apparent. If there is anything Hunt is short of and which his money can't buy, it is good public relations.

Soon after Fortune and Life had demoted Hunt to number two Croesus, a Nebraska garage owner by the same name wrote playfully to the billionaire: "What the hell is the matter? Are you slipping? I see you rated today in the second-string list. Now get on the ball and get back in the top bracket where you belong, us Hunts don't recognize any second raters."

Letters like that rarely come to H. L. Hunt's office. Somebody out there thought of him as a human being. Hunt reproduced literally hundreds of thousands of copies of that letter, mailing them all over the world. When he went into the Middle East to dicker with the sheiks, he took the letter along to show his humanity and even credited it with winning some of the oil concessions.

Saul Pett, one of the first newsmen to sit down and really talk with Hunt, noticed that "he tolerates — almost seems to enjoy — questions about his wealth . . . " Recently, during the New York news conference at which Hunt had tried to explain why he and his patriotic exhibit had been evicted from the proposed World's Fair, he tired of answering questions on that topic and remarked drily, "Let's talk about how rich I am, or something."

The "or something" of how Hunt became rich is not a dull subject. He was born in Vandalia, Ill., seventy-four years ago. He could read by the time he was three and could memorize a prose page in two readings by the time he graduated from the fifth grade. That was the end of his schooling. Hunt, thirteen years old, nearly man-size, began to drift. For a few years he was a cowhand in the Dakotas and in Canada, and a lumberjack in Arizona. But he had always wanted a farm of his own and he had heard his father speak of how rich the soil was around Lake Village, Ark. So young Hunt went there, started growing cotton, and became a very wealthy farmer. Then in 1921, cotton prices dropped to almost nothing, and Hunt was wiped out.

It was a fortunate disaster. It drove him into oil. But how did a broke man get his first lease? For many years the story has been that Hunt, an extremely able man at cards, won his first lease at the gaming table. That explanation got into print for the first time in 1950, in a British newspaper, but it has been repeated many times since. Hunt denies it all.

In any case, Hunt took a fortune from the Arkansas fields, and moved into East Texas in 1930. He was there when C. M. (Dad) Joiner brought in what was to become the world's largest producing field. Hunt bought Joiner's discovery well — No. 1 Daisy Bradford — and obtained 4,000 acres on lease in the vicinity. As a matter of mysterious fact, he wound up with most of the land Joiner started with; nobody has ever figured out how he did it. Hunt says it was simple: he paid $1 million. But Joiner died with little money, and the almost uncountable riches Joiner has taken from Joiner's old land has turned some Texas oil men sour on him; to them it is a matter of historical desert vs. commercial luck.

A Case of Texas Luck

But in oil, where so much depends ultimately on luck, too much is often explained by it. Hunt had more than luck. Around Tyler, Hunt's home town in this period, he was known as a 'loneer.' Unlike most of the pioneer oil men who enjoyed going into the field with their roughnecks, Hunt preferred the office. His genius was inside, making deals. Frank Lake, a Texas insurance commissioner whose father was for a time partner with Hunt, recalls: "Mr. Hunt never forgot anything. Maps, statistics, lease data — he never forgot." And he had a gambler's consummate faith in the law of averages. Hunt once said:

An element of luck is important — when you first get started in the business. If you don't get a well fast, you can't accumulate the capital to start operating on a large enough scale. But after you start rolling, what you mainly need is a thorough knowledge of the laws of chance. A wildcatter can expect to bring in one well for every thirty tries, and only one man in thirty will do that. If you don't have faith in the law of averages, you'll probably get discouraged and quit. In my wildcattling days, I've drilled a hundred dry wells one after the other. Then when prospects looked most pessimistic, the law of averages would go to work for me, just as I figured it would.

The boldness of that statement can be understood only when one realizes that a quarter of a million dollars is not an unusual cost for wildcattting a single well.

By the time Hunt left Tyler for Dallas in 1938, the Hunt Oil Co. . . .

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was what it would remain, the largest independent petroleum producer in the world. During World War II, Hunt held more oil reserves than all the Axis nations put together. Right after the war, when a strike closed the Eastern coal mines during the winter of '46, Hunt supplied 85 per cent of the natural gas put through to the area from the Southwest to relieve the fuel shortage.

He has become the world's most expansive wildcat explorer. "It's my policy," he says, "to take options everywhere."

In recent years he has done exactly that: leases in the Middle East—which even Hunt describes as "fantastic," including generous concessions in Kuwait, that wildcaters' paradise where a dry hole has never been drilled; leases on 11 million acres in Libya, which oil men expect to become just as productive as the Middle East; and widespread developments in this country, including oil reserves of an estimated billion barrels under Montana.

Branching into other industries, Hunt owns ranch land worth $200 million, with 9,000 head of cattle and 12,000 sheep on one ranch alone near Cody, Wyo; timberland, canning factories, citrus groves, some of the largest pecan farms in America, food-processing plants (turning out HLH Hallmark, HLH Alma, HLH Saxet, HLH Butterfield and HLH Ringo) and drug-manufacturing laboratories (HLH Mercurochrome, HLH buffered aspirin, HLH glycerine suppositories, HLH multiple vitamins, HLH "Gastro-Magic"). Hunt is an alchemist under whose hand everything turns either to gold or to controversy.

The controversy stems from the fact that H. L. Hunt, in addition to being very probably the richest man in America, is very probably the country's most powerful propagandist for the extreme Right. The main vehicle for his brand of conservatism today is Life Line, a radio program originating in Washington, D.C., and daily reaching an estimated audience of 5 million persons in forty-five states. It is heard over 331 stations, among which are 25 per cent of the nation's clear channel outlets.

In the weeks immediately preceding the assassination of President Kennedy, the commentators of Life Line were daily warning their listeners that his tyrannical Administration was by-passing the laws of Congress, following a line ordered by Moscow, suppressing the chief spokesmen for freedom in the land and forcing American taxpayers to subsidize communism around the world. It was a time, Life Line insisted, that cried out for "extreme patriotism," and by a ghoulish coincidence, the program broadcast in the Dallas area on the morning of the assassination prophesied a day when American citizens would no longer be allowed to own firearms with which to gun down their rulers. Under communism, which is seen as imminent in this country: "No firearms are permitted the people, because they would then have the weapons with which to rise up against their oppressors."

There is no evidence that the killer of Mr. Kennedy was incited by Life Line; on the other hand, it is little wonder that some members of the far Right believed that one of their members had done the deed. Life Line commentator James Dobbs, when he heard the news, burst into tears and said he would have nothing to do with murder. In the words of a New Republic editorial writer, Life Line broadcasts "the kind of program ... that the brooding Oswalds of the left or right wing listen to and sometimes act on" — an opinion widely shared by those who credit it with creating an activist atmosphere for evil.

As for who sponsors the program, that is a matter of delicate semantics. On the record, it is sponsored by Life Line Foundation, Inc. But behind Life Line Foundation, Inc., is Haroldson Lafayette Hunt, and behind Hunt is the United States In-
ternal Revenue Service, a silent but very faithful partner.

More than $4 million has been spent by Hunt in support of Life Line, but inasmuch as the foundation is tax-exempt, this money is deductible from Hunt's income tax. For a man in his tax bracket, this means the program has not cost him anything at all. The public at large, in a manner of speaking, has underwritten Life Line. For ten years the Internal Revenue Service has stood by Hunt, and there is no serious reason to think that it will turn on him now, although a number of Congressmen are attempting to break up the IRS-Hunt alliance.

‘Gastro-Majic’

About ten blocks east of the Kennedy assassination site in Dallas are the offices of H. L. Hunt. The entire seventh floor of the Mercantile Bank Building is his, but for personal use he stays close to an unpretentious corner room. The leather in the chairs is badly cracked and discolored. There is only one photograph, of a son, on the dark green walls. There is no executive-suite pushbutton panel here, no gadgets but one—a small powerful radio over which Hunt can pick up Life Line twenty-two times a day by rotating the dial from Nashville to Corpus Christi.

On a table is a display for the digestive tablet, “Gastro-Majic,” which for some reason seems to be Hunt’s favorite drug creation, along with a photostated letter from a satisfied customer (“I had been troubles with gas which lay like a lump in my stomach for two years . . .”), a wastebasket on which are pasted old and curling labels of “HLH” food products, and a citation from the state of Georgia.

On his desk is one decoration, a dime-store toy flag, the pole about eight inches high. For the prescribed thirty-day period after Kennedy’s death, the minuscule rayon patch hung at half-mast.

Advertising has in the last five years reached pettifog proportions in Hunt’s life. He constantly talks of patriotic advertising. Pasted face-out on the office windowpanes are small stickers advertising Life Line. One is inclined to ask if they are meant to catch the eye of anyone who happens to be strolling past at the seventh-floor level, but it is difficult to joke about them; they are stuck there with so much sincerity. Hunt plasters his car with Life Line and “Gastro-Majic” stickers, and asks his employees to do the same. Sometimes he circles the block an extra time before parking to let Dallas pedestrians have one more look. He has even gone behind the counter in the drugstore on the street level of his office building to promote and sell “Gastro-Majic.” One amazed Dallas attorney recalls the sales pitch as: “Hello, I am H. L. Hunt, the world’s richest man and these are ‘Gastro-Majic’ which I make, so they must be good. Try some.” For a while Hunt had a large billboard advertising Life Line and “Gastro-Majic” on the front lawn of his Dallas home, which is a replica of, but reputedly five times larger than, Mount Vernon, the City Council made him take the sign down after neighbors complained, but, undaunted, Hunt put up a smaller one on a vacant lot next door, where it still stands. On his mailbox by the road there is another crude hand-painted sign: “Life Line, 6:15 P.M.; dial 1080.”

(There is a simple reason why the digestive tablet and other drug and food products are advertised equally with the program itself. The HLH products are the chief sponsors of Life Line; if you listen to Life Line, you hear HLH advertising; if you buy HLH products, you help support Life Line. The distinction between patriotism and profit does not exist for Hunt. “Everything I do,” he says, “I do for profit.”)

If Hunt participates in this exhibitionism awkwardly, it may be because he has had to force himself into it. He is by nature a recluse, a mystery to the public, hardly known even to other oil men of Texas. Hugh Roy Cullen, Houston multimillionaire and philanthropist, lived an active life in Texas petroleum and died at an advanced age without ever laying eyes on Hunt. Until 1945, Hunt had never permitted himself to be interviewed. Since then, he has been interviewed privately not over half a dozen times.

Only a fanatical patriotism—which he gladly equates with love of private enterprise—forced him at last into the open. He has even, on rare occasions since World War II, addressed civic clubs. Reminiscent of Coolidge wearing the Indian war bonnet, Hunt once told a patriotic joke to a Dallas Optimist Club. These are acts of desperation. He was reluctant to speak publicly, he says, “because I did not know how and I was afraid to try to speak. But I think we’re so far gone that everyone is going to have to do everything he can to dispel the people’s apathy. I think we are being taken over by the Communists.”

Unless the exigencies of his country demand it, however, he seldom ventures farther than his corner green room. In adjoining offices there is great activity: secretaries mimeograph and mail hundreds of thousands of Hunt letters-to-the-editor or make Xerox copies of political clippings for filing; farther down the hall, oil attorneys and geologists and petroleum engineers look after the fast and hectic business of the H. L. Hunt Oil Co. But in Hunt’s office, the atmosphere is almost benign as the soft-voiced old man, his wispy white hair forming a quasi-nimbus, dreams of saving the freedom of the Western world. “If we are not too far gone, if our freedom can be saved,” he says firmly, “Life Line will save it.”

As unpretentious as the room is Hunt himself. Visitors who have been asked to stay for lunch, envisioning an elaborate meal, are surprised when Hunt sends out for a
I do something to turn the tide of world communism, I can't get a word in the papers.

Hunt looks like the kindly judge in an early Shirley Temple movie. He is rarely generous, but frequently thoughtful. And if he is privately quaint, at least he is not the overbearing public 'character' so many Texas oil men take pride in being. He drives old cars and he wears old suits and he does not flaunt his riches. Even after he got his second billion, he said in all earnestness that he still felt the highest calling a man could have was to be a farmer. He enjoys children and he loves his country.

Why then has he, possibly more than any Texan at this moment in history, aroused so much bitter editorial animosity? What is there about Hunt which prompts one Dallas editor, who has observed him for years, to say coldly: 'If he had more flair and imagination, if he weren't basically such a damned luck, Hunt could be one of the most dangerous men in America.'

Hunt Behind the Throne

Since the late 1940s, Hunt has fancied himself in the role of kingmaker and as a shaper of national policy. He first became really keen on profit-politics when, like other big oil men, he got the scent of the underwater lands. His first choice as the man who could be counted on to see that those lands were placed in the proper hands was General Douglas MacArthur, whom he undertook to put in the White House. By Hunt's account, he personally arranged a meeting of MacArthur, General Lucius Clay, ex-President Herbert Hoover and Dwight Eisenhower in the Waldorf-Astoria before the 1952 Republican convention. The idea was to get Eisenhower to throw his support behind MacArthur. Ike refused.

At the Chicago convention, to which Hunt was a delegate, he continued to press his campaign. Today he claims, with an elaborate explanation of how a number of Taft delegates first promised to switch and then didn't, that he came "within two hours of making MacArthur the nominee." So his first efforts at kingship failed, and the results were just as shocking as he had feared. When he bid $17 an acre on offshore oil tracts that the government was accustomed to leasing for an average of $406 an acre, Secretary of the Interior Frederick Seaton turned him down—even though Republican leaders Dirksen and Halleck accompanied Hunt to a protest interview with Seaton.

When the tidelands were transferred to state jurisdiction, Hunt got a more sympathetic hearing. Not only had he been a supporter of Governor Allan Shivers, the bane of all Texas liberals, but Shivers was on the board of advisers of Hunt's first propaganda venture, Facts Forum. So no one was much surprised when Shivers' land commissioner, Bascom Giles, who later went to the penitentiary for cheating the state, approved every one of Hunt's bids for more than 100,000 acres of tidelands oil leases, although Hunt bid an average of $6 an acre while the overall bid average was $78.

Hunt's mouth turns down when he thinks back to the Eisenhower administration. His failure to get the oil leases was just one of several "double crosses" he suffered from the Eisenhower team. He finds it hard to believe that he once said (1945) that his order of preference for President was MacArthur, Taft, Warren and Eisenhower. Warren, of course, has become to Hunt an unspeakable traitor and Eisenhower—Almost as bad. "Except that he got rid of a few pervers in government," Hunt says, "Eisenhower was no good. Eisenhower was the worst President, the most harmful President we have ever had. He was so popular he didn't have to do anything people asked him to do."

That is one reason why Hunt takes pleasure in the airy notion that "I alone and single-handed, by telephone, letter and personal talks," whipped the legislatures of twelve states into ratifying the Twenty-Second Amendment (no third term). "It took me only seven weeks to do it," Hunt says proudly. "I consider it my only public-affairs victory, but it was a good one, because otherwise Eisenhower would still be President." Only Hunt has ever gone on record as crediting Hunt with this "victory," and since Johnson took office even he has not been so eager to claim it. "Johnson," he says, lighting up, "is the kind of President who can lead Congress around by its nose. I wouldn't mind seeing him in there for three terms."

The memory of the Eisenhower
period is especially bitter to Hunt because, without at all profiting from the switch, he abandoned MacArthur at the last minute for a time. MacArthur had no more loyal friend. There are scenes that Hunt can remember with satisfaction. When Dallas newsmen arrived at Joe McCarthy's hotel suite in early April, 1952, they found the Senator, without coat or tie, playing a hot game of gin rummy with Hunt McCarthy hurriedly dressed and allowed photographers to take a picture of Hunt pining a MacArthur-for-President button on him. But by October the Mac-button-pinna was over for Hunt, and although the General's name would be on the Texas ballot as nominee of the Christian Nationalist and Constitutional parties, Hunt announced he would vote for Ike.

In this instance, it was probably the politically wise thing to do; at the same time it points up one-of Hunt's ingrained weaknesses as a political amateur: he insists on betting on a sure thing, insists that politics provide him with what the gaming table will not. Hunt concedes, "I never have contributed anything to a candidate unless I thought he had an awfully good chance of winning," and many politicians who thought Hunt was their friend have found out how true this statement really is. When Texas' favorite demagogue, W. Lee (Pass the biscuits, Pappy) O'Daniel, wanted to make a political comeback, Hunt, who had visited in O'Daniel's home many times and entertained O'Daniel. in his, sent word that he "wouldn't put money down a dry hole."

If Hunt was disappointed in Eisenhower, the feeling was mutual. At the peak of the first campaign, Eisenhower's political field marshals worked up an hour-long television program which they thought was good enough to make the election a certainty. All they needed was another $300,000 for nation-wide channel time. Someone thought of Hunt, who was promptly flown to New York for a sneak preview Hunt was impressed. "It's great," he said. "It's just what we need to win. I'll back you up to $5,000."

It was a typical Hunt gesture, but his tight-fisted attitude toward politics is something many politicians refuse to believe. Even the liberal Texas Senator, Ralph Yarborough, who has been bucking big oil money his whole career, has said: "I've never heard of Hunt giving more than $250 to $500 to a particular candidate, but he must be spreading it around. He must have a front man he spreads his money through. A man with that kind of bank roll is bound to have."

But he doesn't. Hunt has given as much as $38,000 to the national Republican Party in a single campaign year (1956), but this is not considered exactly a windfall from a man who earns a reputed $200,000 a year and can shrow off a $49,000 fine for running illegal oil. Certainly a party gift of that amount gives an individual candidate no grounds for anticipating a contribution. Only rarely — as in backing Smathers over Pepper, or Goldwater over McFarland in Goldwater's first Senate campaign — has Hunt allowed preference to overcome innate niggardliness.

Stuart Long, a political writer who has been around Texas so long he can remember the state's last liberal governor, gives the reason: "He's not interested in state politics. State politics can't help his oil, except rarely. And he won't put much money in national politics to help a candidate head-on. That kind of money he has to pay taxes on. He'd rather spend his political money supporting something like Life Line which he can write off for taxes. . . That's the way Hunt likes to spend his political money — helping himself while Uncle Sam picks up the check."

The back-room professionals know this and treat Hunt accordingly. At the 1960 Democratic national convention in Los Angeles, a close friend of then Texas Governor Price Daniel who was sharing a suite with the governor, recalls: "I saw old Hunt wandering down the hall, looking like a lost soul. He wandered into Lyndon Johnson's suite, which was right next to ours, and tried to get somebody to talk to him. There were a lot of people in there but they were all too busy to talk to Hunt, so he wandered on down the hall and talked with me. And I thought, 'Here's this poor ol' boy with two billion bucks in his pocket and he can't get anybody to talk to but me.'"

Hunt remembers his role quite differently: "I personally intervened to get Lyndon to take the Vice Presidency." And did Johnson acknowledge Hunt's influence? Hunt fiddled with papers on his desk. "I don't know. Lyndon's not the kind to say one way or the other."

Johnson might have preferred Hunt to keep his support, moral or (less likely) financial, far away. As it was, Hunt had — with all good intentions, of course — already done more than any one man to damage Johnson's preliminary campaign for the nomination.

God and Taxes

One of the living monuments of Dallas-style culture is the Reverend Dr. W. A. Criswell, pastor of the First Baptist Church. It is the largest Baptist church in the world, having 18,500 members (one of whom is the Rev. Billy Graham), and a $1.5 million budget. By his own description, Criswell is a "pulpit pounder" of the old school. He is handsome, forceful; a real orator.

Now if there is anything Hunt has a weakness for, it is oratory. He likes Criswell's style. He also likes Criswell's politics. "I am a conservative in theology, a conservative in sociology, a conservative in politics, and you can tell it from my sermons," Criswell says. "If I had a liberal hair in my head, I would pluck it out." (Although Hunt has claimed, "I haven't a conservative hair in my head," he means that all his hairs are "Constructive." The two men's scalps are much alike.)

About seven years ago, Hunt began dropping in on Criswell's Sunday service. Four years ago, Hunt brought his new wife and his second family of four children to Criswell's church, and all six of them were baptized en masse. The two leaders of the Right became confidants. Criswell sometimes mailed out printed copies of Life Line to his parishioners, and Hunt on occasion sent Criswell's sermons to other ministers.
Not long before the 1960 Democratic Presidential convention Criswell mounted his pulpit and sounded an alarm against the threat of Romanism in politics that was heard round the country: "The election of a Catholic as President would mean the end of religious liberty in America." Kennedy had gone on record as favoring a review of the oil industry's tax benefits, including the depletion allowance. A "review" could only mean a lessening of benefits. The Reverend Criswell's message sounded useful indeed to Hunt.

Laymen do not always understand just why oil men feel so passionately about depletion allowances. It is very simple. By choosing the right allowance (there are more than one kind) and by deftly manipulating such things as foreign tax credits, oil companies pay much reduced taxes, and some of them manage to pay no income tax at all.

When Hunt talks of his country's troubles, he does not always sound funereal. But when he discusses the oil-depletion allowance, and possible legislative threats to it, his face takes on the stricken blankness of one who has just heard the last trump. "I am in favor of depletion allowances for all natural resources," he said recently, "but without the depletion allowance oil we are utterly ruined."

That's why Hunt promptly had 200,000 reprints of Criswell's sermon printed and mailed out, after which he sat back to watch a wave of aroused Protestantism wash Kennedy out of the running. Instead, the wave was one of indignation from editorial writers and the general public at this artificial injection of hysteria into American politics.

The Senate took an even sterner approach. The Criswell flier did not name its source and there is a federal law against distributing this kind of anonymous circular after a campaign is officially under way. In Dallas, the perpetrators panicked Hunt ducked out entirely and could not be found. Criswell denied that Hunt had paid for the leaflets, but Ralph B. Raughley, a partner in a Great Neck, L.I., printing firm, told a Senate subcommittee that an employee of Hunt's had paid $10,006 for the printing and mailing of the sermon to Protestant ministers.

Fortunately for Hunt, Raughley also swore that the order had been placed before the Democratic convention closed in Los Angeles. Thus Hunt was legally, if not morally, in the clear. But newspapers continued to hoot into the darkness of Hunt's retreat. One Texas editorial writer trumpeted, "Come out, Big Daddy, Wherever You Are," and eventually Hunt did just that. He hadn't been hiding, he said; he had been writing a book. Yes, he admitted, he had paid for the leaflet, but he did it only to help Lyndon. Poor Lyndon.

The New York Times called the Hunt-Criswell leaflet one of the most widely circulated pieces of campaign literature of 1960, so the damage was irretrievably done. But that was the last heard from Hunt until four days before the election, when he endorsed the Kennedy-Johnson ticket. By this time the very mention of Hunt was considered politically leprous, and Henry Jackson, national Democratic chairman, quickly called a press conference to repudiate Hunt's endorsement and financial support. In fact, Hunt hadn't offered any financial support, but Jackson repudiated it anyway, just to be safe.

Only once more did Hunt the king maker dream dreams. In 1961, he told friends that General Edwin Walker would make the ideal candidate for governor of Texas on the Republican ticket. And having won that office, Walker would be the perfect compromise GOP candidate for President in 1964. It might have been a practical venture, though who can say? Walker ran as a Democrat, and he ran last. Hunt's only comment was that Walker "is being very unresponsive."

Since the Kennedy assassination, Hunt has become increasingly sensitive about the fact that he and General Walker are fellow towns- men. The combination is too tempting for writers who profile Dallas to overlook. Walker, almost tongue-tied as a speaker, gets his messages across with a kind of parochial semaphore, using United States flags. He has five of them in front of his home. When Dallasites spat on Ambassador Adlai Stevenson, and the city of Dallas officially apologized for the spittle, Walker cried shame for the retreat by flying his flags upside down. Then came the assassination. Sue Reinhardt, staff writer for the New York Herald Tribune, did no more than mention that "Two of the country's leading Right-Wing advocates live in Dallas: former Maj. Gen. Edwin A. Walker and oil millionaire H. L. Hunt." But it was enough to goad Hunt into writing a singularly frank letter to the editor: "I do not feel that you should be attempting to smear General Edwin Walker with me, or me with General Walker." On other occasions Hunt has indicated sadly that he knows his name is sometimes used as "a smear word" in politics. Just before James Dobbs, who temporarily retired from the Life Line staff to run for Congress in Texas, was defeated by a two-to-one vote, Hunt acknowledged that Dobbs might be carrying rather heavy weight in the race because of his Life Line-Hunt relationship. Significantly, Dobbs was within 2,000 votes of leading in the primary, but then came the assassination and he lost the run-off by more than 14,000 votes.

Failing as a campaign pamphleteer, Hunt was meanwhile developing another side of his political writing talents. "Except that I am slow, I am the best writer I know," he says, and he must mean it because he is very free with advice to writers, amateur and professional. William Buckley's philosophy wins Hunt's approval, but as a writer Buckley falls short: "He uses too many big words." Believing that letters to the editor are the most widely read part of the newspaper, Hunt mails out sometimes three and four different letters a day on "public affairs" topics to hundreds of newspapers. Their reception is varied. One Texas editor said, "Hunt earns in

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one hour about $10,000 to $12,-
000. That's what I earn in a year. He probably spends an hour dictating each letter that comes in here. I like to cut them in half, because that means I'm putting about $3,000 of Hunt money in the wastebasket."

While he was hiding from newsmen
after the Clauswell uproar, Hunt used the time to complete the paper-
back political novel Alpaca (H. L.
Hunt Publishing Co., Soc; H. L.
Hunt Publ. Co. is a euphemism for a
firm that ordinarily prints tele-
phone books). Many Dallas new-
smen are convinced that the hero of
Alpaca is drawn from Hunt's view of
himself. "He had burning convic-
tions but there were few in Alpaca,
he, told himself, who could agree
with him." But who was the proto-
type for the heroine, Mara, an opera-
singer? Are there clues in Hunt's
life? True, he has always been
vaguely interested in music. His
teen-age daughters often sing the
blessing for supper and they also
sang a musical advertisement at
Hunt's autograph party at the Cokes-
bury Book Store in Dallas. Unfor-
tunately, few who were there can
now remember more than the two
opening lines:

How much is that book in the
window?
The one that says all the smart
things . . .
to the tune of "How Much Is That
Doggie in the Window." On at least
one other occasion Hunt evidenced
his interest in the musical arts,
when he underwrote a student pro-
duction of The Barber of Seville
at the Music Hall at the Dallas Fair
Grounds. Overwhelmed by this rare
generosity on Hunt's part, the cast
asked him to say a few words at
intermission. He used the time to
put in a plug for "Gastro-Majik,
passing out samples to the audience.

Alpaca is best remembered, not
for its leve story, however, but for
the "model constitution" around
which Hunt wrapped the story—a
constitution that gives each person
a quota of votes based primarily on
how much he pays in taxes. There
are other ways of getting votes
under the Hunt plan: if you are old
enough to draw retirement pay but
refuse to accept it, you get two extra
votes; if you are a government work-
er and refuse to accept more than
50 per cent of your pay, you get one
extra vote. On the other hand, any-
one receiving welfare or sick pay
from the government gets no vote
at all.

A book reviewer of the
Alpaca constitutional plan, "It's a
kind of a fascist democracy, if you
get what I mean," Hunt, on whom
sublettees are sometimes lost, later
complimented this reviewer: "You
are the only one who really under-
stood what I was getting at."

Hunt is deadly serious about the
message of Alpaca. Every Congress-
man has received bundles of the
book So have heads of foreign
states and many colleges. One small
school in Michigan received 100
copies, unsolicited of course Still in
manuscript is a constitutional pro-
gram even better than the Alpaca
plan. Hunt, who is just waiting for
two weeks of free time to finish
it," isn't giving away the plot, but
some idea can be had from the title.

Youropia.

Neither Fact Nor Forum

That's the personality behind Life
Line, a bumptious super-patriot.
But among those who have followed
Hunt's career most closely there is
some suspicion that, whether his ap-
pearance of awkward naïveté is
natural or unnatural, he is clever
enough to use it to hide his im-
mense power as a propagandist.

The power is there. Retrograde
social and political opinions, either
written by Hunt or business asso-
ciates or first approved by them be-
fore airing, consume more than 30,-
000 hours of the country's radio
time each year. Hunt estimates that
Life Line is heard by between 5
million and 6 million "very dedi-
cated" listeners daily, and this is
probably no exaggeration.

These programs have advocated
the passage or rejection of specific
legislation, contrary to Life Line's
tax-exemption, and have told only
one side of controversial issues—
without the stations giving time to
the other side—in direct viola-
tion of Federal Communications
Commission rulings for programs
that enjoy an "educational" rating.

Yet it is only during the past year
that either the FCC or the Treasury
has shown even the mildest interest
in reviewing the status of Life Line
—a status that has allowed Hunt
himself, Hunt Oil Co., Hunt subdi-
siary oil companies, Hunt's grown
children, Gulf Oil Corp., Lone Star
Steel Co., Sun Oil Co., Acme Steel
Co., the Mercantile National Bank
of Dallas, Sears, Roebuck & Co.,
Standard Oil Co., Standard Oil of
Indiana, Triangle Refineries, U. S.
Steel Corp., Ohio Oil Co., numerous
banks and petroleum drilling
companies, as well as individuals
such as James Ralph Wood, president
of Southwestern Life Insurance Co.
of Dallas, and Gen. R. E. Wood, presi-
dent of Sears, to spend millions of
tax-deductible dollars over the past
ten years to advocate rank partisanship
and pro-business legislation,
under the guise of making contribu-
tions to a foundation that was origi-


If the Life Line Foundation is not
that, what is it? One thing it is not
is charitable. In the twelve years of
its existence, Hunt's foundation has
spent $4.5 million. Of this, only
$1,000 was a "charitable contribu-
tion," going to the Wadley Blood
Center of Dallas in 1957. Hunt does
not believe in charities "What will
your charities mean, if freedom is
lost?" he asks Life Line advisor W.
R. White, president emeritus of Bay-
lor University in Waco, Texas, once
asked Hunt to help his school. Hunt
replied, "Life Line needs the money
more than Baylor." But White was
not unpleased with the response.

"He didn't turn me down imme-
diately, and that's better than most
college presidents do when they go
to Mr. Hunt," he said.

So we come back to the question:
If Life Line is not nonpartisan, not
nonprofit, not educational, and not
charitable, what is it? The answer
is subtly threaded through the his-
tory of the organization, a history
that began in 1952 under the name
of Facts Forum, Inc.

The most important legal
feature of Facts Forum—a feature
passed on to its successor, Life Line
Foundation, Inc.—was the underly-
ing duplicity of its creation. It was
granted a charter by the state of
Texas to organize "small discussion
groups devoted to the study of the
art of living, social advancement,
the science of government, and agri-
culture," and on both the 1951 and
1952 applications to the Internal
Revenue Service for tax-exempt
status, Facts Forum was presented
as being engaged in "discussion
groups, lending libraries and polls."

The Nation
'Strangely, no mention was made of Facts Forum's most far-reaching endeavor—radio and TV lectures. Nor was there mention of a newspaper which then circulated 60,000 copies and now circulates 40,000 copies.

In a covering letter, Robert H. Dedman, one of the directors of Facts Forum, did mention incidentally—deep into page two—that Dan Smoot, Facts Forum coordinator, had a fifteen-minute radio program, but this was plainly meant to be taken as an auxiliary activity, something Smoot did more or less on his own, for under Question 10 of Form 1023, the foundation directors were asked to list all activities in which Facts Forum engaged and their response overlooked radio programs.

But the reticence of the Facts Forum founders did not end there. E. I. McLarney, deputy IRS commissioner, demanded that they reveal salaries and names and addresses of all contributors. This information was never given, but Facts Forum won its tax-exemption anyway.

The unwillingness of Life Line's operators to divulge proper information continues today. Although the foundation took in nearly half a million dollars in 1962, the 990-A return it filed with the Internal Revenue Service leaves blank all questions as to salaries paid, gross profit, gain or loss of assets, number of employees or itemized expenditures.

In 1957, when Facts Forum, Inc. became Life Line, Inc.—changing name, locale and staff—the Internal Revenue Service, in its gentlemanly fashion, transferred the tax-exemption to Life Line without probing further into the organization's activities. Since Life Line, contrary to the statement of its charter, holds no discussion groups, has a small and inactive lending library, and conducts no polls, but does sponsor a radio show heard over 331 stations and does mail out 40,000 copies of a companion propaganda sheet titled "Life Lines," there appears to be little similarity between the organization the IRS thought it was validating for exemption purposes and the organization now benefiting by that exemption.

Yet the Internal Revenue Service hardly seems concerned. After twelve years; it is conducting its first audit of the foundation's books, although numerous members of both houses of Congress have regularly asked for a tax-status review of Life Line (Facts Forum) since the days when it was the most faithful espouser of pro-McCarthyism on the air waves.

Usually the Internal Revenue Service has not even bothered to acknowledge these requests for review. When response is made, it is given with an air of furtiveness. In 1954, Rep. Wayne Hays was locked in a fierce struggle with Rep. Carroll Reece over the investigation of tax-exempt foundations. Reece was out to get the Rockefeller and Carnegie and Ford Foundations because he had somehow come to believe that "those people" had been responsible for blocking Taft's nomination. And Reece had the collateral idea that if Taft had been elected, he would have been appointed Secretary of State. It was a grudge investigation, and Hays, a minority member of the committee, was fighting to keep Reece at bay.

In this, Facts Forum, Inc., was Hays's best weapon. Every time Reece demanded to see the books of the "liberal" foundations, Hays would demand to see the books of Facts Forum, and thus they stalemated. Hays was under no illusion about his chances to recruit the IRS to his side, for early in the long debate he had petitioned the IRS for a review of the Facts Forum tax status and been told that the Facts Forum records had somehow been misplaced.

Only three days later, however, the counsel for Reece's committee reported that the IRS had made the Facts Forum records available and, sure enough, they showed that the Hunt-sponsored organization truly deserved its tax-exempt benefits. Hunt took notice of this episode and placed $5,000 to win on a Hays opponent in a subsequent race, but in vain.

Only a few months after Facts Forum was founded, Senator McCarthy came to Dallas and it was then that he first met Hunt, sealing their friendship over gin rummy. Before the year was out, Miss Jean Kerr, who was then Senator McCarthy's assistant and would eventually marry him, went to work for Hunt. Also joining Hunt's staff at this time was Robert E. Lee, a close personal friend of McCarthy (Mrs. Lee would be matron of honor at McCarthy's marriage to Miss Kerr).

Miss Kerr and Lee had worked together before. Lee, an ex-FBI man, had been an investigator for the House Appropriations Committee which came up with the core list of "Communists" around which McCarthy, with the researching help of Miss Kerr, built his historical list of "205." Lee and Miss Kerr also raised funds to defeat Senator Milard Tydings of Maryland, as is recorded in Senate journals.

Now they had come together again, their objective this time being to launch the Facts Forum television shows. Lee moderated the first three of these, and then went on to what was, to Hunt, a much more worthy position. He was appointed, under the sponsorship of McCarthy, to the Federal Communications Commission. The only network experience he had ever had in his life was his brief service on Facts Forum but, as Lee put it to the Senators who were studying his confirmation, "I feel that too much experience can sometimes be a handicap." Apparently the Senators thought so, too, because they ended the hearing without even asking him about his much more extensive experience in compiling lists of subversives.

The committee had raised the question of Lee's possible allegiance to Facts Forum, but Hunt dispelled any such fears by testifying that he did not think Lee was the kind of man who would grant favors and...
that he, Hunt, would certainly never consider asking for favors.

Several months after his confirmation, Lee was back in Dallas, guest in Hunt's home, with Pat Boone being brought in from Hollywood to serenade him. The Hunt girls also serenaded him with the "Alpaca Song." Of Lee, Hunt wrote in an office memo to an employee: "He is a good friend, is a forceful person, so I think this insures that we will not get nipped in the bud by the commission."

In a mood of such confidence, it was a real pleasure for Hunt to gather right thinkers for the task ahead: a board of advisers that included Gen. Robert Wood, chairman of a dinner at which McCarthy tried to link Adlai Stevenson with communism; Gen. A. C. Wedemeyer, later a member of the advisory committee of the John Birch Society; Hollywood actor John Wayne, who campaigned for McCarthy; and Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, who in 1960 was to warn against a Catholic in the White House.

The front man was commentator Dan Smoot, former FBI agent, whose Dan Smoot Report has since been given a five-star rating by Robert Welch as just right for putting in doctors' and dentists' waiting rooms.

These were the carefree days. With McCarthy setting the tone and Lee guarding the door, Hunt through Smoot could bear down on the theme that "modern liberalism, communism and fascism are essentially the same." Smoot was the star of the Facts Forum show for four and a half years but eventually fell out with his employer, partly over pay, partly because Smoot was tired of pretending to give both sides of public issues. On the latter point, Hunt agreed. After spending $5.4 million on Facts Forum, the admission must stick in his throat, but Hunt today considers it a failure, "I don't believe Facts Forum did much good. It got a bad reputation by trying to present both sides. Its critics didn't want both sides. They didn't want Bricker and Kefauver on the same program."

Which critics is Hunt speaking of —friendly or unfriendly? Senator Mike Monroney summed up the effort as "neither fact nor forum."

Representative Hays damned the show as "giving both sides of one side" and "no more merits tax exemption than the A&P."

The broadcast format of Facts Forum was for Smoot to take a subject, speak for two or three minutes on what he called "the liberal-Socialist" side, and then turn around and give equal time to the conservative view. He did this faithfully, but some liberals protested: it wasn't so much that he was cheating on them; it was what he said during the times that made the program appear weighted in favor of conservatism.

How did they get that impression?

Facts Forum Radio Program Number 89 was on the question: Does the Korean armistice represent a victory for the free world?

Smoot opened with the views of those who say yes:

- President Eisenhower expressed the feeling of America when, in announcing the signing of the Korean truce, he said, "Tonight we greet, with prayers of thanksgiving, the official news that an armistice was signed in Korea."

His announcement brought hope and happiness to the hundreds of thousands of American homes and families of the men who are stationed in the battle area.

The fighting and bloodshed have been stopped. The incredible carnage has ceased and the negotiations of the conference table are to begin.

Although only the future can determine the success or failure of the Korean conference, we can rejoice in the knowledge that the first test of collective resistance to aggression has proved that the United Nations, as the agency of collective security for world peace, can succeed.

On he went at this pace for another minute or two, calm, blithe, pleasant. Then he turned with a crinkle to the position of those who say no:

Government propaganda handouts will try to fob the Korean disaster off as a shining victory over aggression. The versatile clique of phrase-makers will feed us with stories about how our determined stand in Korea wore the Reds down and disrupted their plans for conquest. The magic of words will transform our national tragedy into a success.

But the millions of men and women who make up the great proud body of the nation realize, with pain and wonder, that America, whose power overshadows the world, has lost her first war.

And it wasn't a minor war, or a police action, as Harry Truman liked to call it. It was one of our deadliest ordeals. It cost us over 136,000 human casualties. It cost our faithful allies, the South Koreans, over 2 million corpses.

He counted the corpses meticulously, and paused to deplore the "miraculous opportunity to deliver a death blow to communism in Asia," which our leaders threw away, and spoke with quivering anger of "the will-o'-the-wisp of NATO—another quagmire of frustration and indecision," and closed crying, shame for "coercing our friends and appeasing our enemies."

Hunt insists today that this kind of program was criticized mostly for being too liberal.

Hunt and his Facts Forum staff kept striving for balance. But it appeared to be an unobtainable aspiration. In one issue of Facts Forum News they printed a list of the nation's leading patriots of that time. Well up on the list was Dr. J. B. Mathews, former counsel to the House Un-American Activities Committee, who once charged that "the largest single group supporting the Communist apparatus in the United States today is composed of Protestant clergymen."

In 1955, Hunt looked around for a suitable young man to receive a college scholarship, Liberal or conservative, he didn't care. But the Facts Forum panel of judges could find no liberal worthy of their $1,500; and wound up giving it to young Paul Crouch, who had written a very revealing piece, "The Untold Oppenheimer Story," for the April issue of their paper.

—William Buckley, before he had...
his outlet in the National Review, wrote an essay for the Facts Forum News entitled "The Liberal Mind," which was, he said, the product of "the swollen and irresistible stream fed for so many years by the waters of rationalism, positivism, Marxism and utopianism."

Hunt also tried to get more participation from the public. He offered prizes for the best letters-to-the-editor, prizes not only of money but of electric blankets, toaster-ties, beds and a whole discount house of other items. The Providence Journal made a spot study of these awards, however, and found that in December, 1953, Facts Forum paid $360 for eleven letters—$275 for nine pro-Hunt letters, $75 for one anti-Hunt letter, and $10 for one nonpolitical letter.

### Pretense of Balance

No matter how hard Hunt tried, Facts Forum kept coming up conservative. It became too much of a strain, and Hunt closed the show. At the time, one of his associates was quoted: "He just got tired of useless and lost causes. Maybe later he will turn his energies to something else more in line with what he hoped it would be." The "lost cause" was the pretense of balance.

When Facts Forum changed its alliterative skin to reveal Life Line underneath in 1958, however, all pretense was gone. "Life Line," says Hunt today, "is only trying to present one side—the Constructive (conservative) viewpoint. That's in public affairs. It's also a part-time religious program. So it has a double-barreled appeal."

Hunt has consistently felt that the best marks men with the double-barreled HLH scatter gun are ex-FBI agents and ex-Church of Christ preachers. Smoot, Lee and Gene Scudder, one of Life Line's current commentators, are graduates of the FBI. The most effective moderators, however, have come from the ministry: James Dobbs, an off-and-on commentator for Life Line when he isn't running for Congress and being defeated, and Wayne Poucher, whose only apprenticeship in practical politics was helping Strom Thurmond win a write-in race for the Senate, are both Church of Christ ministers.

One of Hunt's closest advisers is Dr. George Benson, president of the Church of Christ college in Staley, Ark. Dr. Barrett Batzell Baxter, head of the Bible department at a Church of Christ school in Nashville, was on the Life Line board of directors and advisory board. At one point, Hunt tried desperately to get Pat Boone, who sometimes leads the singing at the Church of Christ he attends, to join Life Line's advisory board. Hunt even threatened to use his friendship with Cecil B. De Mille to force Boone into accepting.

Friends of Hunt, including Baylor's Dr. White, and First Baptist's Dr. Criswell, have wondered aloud about Hunt's predilection for the leaders of this arch-fundamentalist denomination, a modern outgrowth of the fervent religious group once known as "Campbellites." One explanation is that both the Campbellites and Hunt think it very difficult to be saved—the Campbellites limit spiritual salvation to members of the sect, and Hunt estimates political salvation at 2 percent of the population. But Dobbs offers this reason: "The simplicity, the personal responsibility, the nonemotional quality of the Church of Christ all create an affinity of belief with political conservatism."

Hunt would probably not agree with Dobbs on the "nonemotional" part, for Poucher once led Hunt through an emotional experience directed towards his conversion. On one visit to Washington, Hunt spent a couple of days at Poucher's home. He was taken right into the family circle. Poucher recalls:

> The time came for our family Bible reading and prayer, and I asked if he would like to join us. He said he would, but would be a better observer than a participant. So we brought a chair to the children's bedside. It is our custom to kneel around the bed for our prayers, and as we did he slid off his chair and took his place, kneeling at the bedside. . . . As we stood up to say good night to the children, his face was streaming with his tears. . . . I took him to the hotel and for two hours we talked about him and his soul. I finished by telling him that I wanted to take him to the Church building and baptize him. These were his words through his tears: "Wayne, I want to, but I have been an evil person and I don't feel I can ask God to forgive me until I have lived better for a little longer time."

Poucher followed up with a barrage of recorded sermons on Conversion, Repentence, Obedience, Baptism and Salvation, but Hunt never came into the church. Still, to the very last of his employment under Hunt, Poucher considered the old billionaire his personal project for conversion, asking a friend: "Has God set me to do the work of carrying the Gospel to those who will encounter the greatest difficulty in reaching Heaven?"

Possibly because he was as certain as Hunt of his rightness, Poucher played an important part in Hunt's life and in the shaping of Life Line, always keeping a Calvinistic edge on Hunt's blunt political theories, sometimes even intruding a nose of ethics into its overwhelming commercialism. When Hunt insisted that "the battle for Freedom is a battle between Communism and the Profit Motive System," Poucher came back with the harsh reminder that "your life expectancy on this earth is almost used up" so [you] had better believe "the battle for freedom is not a battle between free enterprise, the profit motive system, democracy, or whatever name we might call it—and communism—but it is a battle between good, which is God, and evil, which is Satan, for the hearts and minds of men."

But for every piece of advice Poucher unloaded on Hunt, Hunt unloaded six on Poucher. When Poucher spoke out on Life Line against "hate groups," Hunt counseled him to slow down.

> "Hate" publications and 'hate' groups are difficult to define," said Hunt. "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 carry the torch for them."

Later, trying to educate Poucher to pretense, Hunt suggested he raise a well-known Jew because then "Life Line would be given the credit of extolling and memorializing a Jew." And still later, Hunt sent him an editorial from Gerald L.K. Smith's Cross and Flag, with the memo, "Regardless of what one may think of Gerald L.K. Smith, he
may be doing more good than any other person in the present fight against Communism. . . . He has been listing the Kennedy appointees in the most revealing light of all publications. . . .

Sometimes Hunt's suggestions so stunned Poucher that he could think of no reply. Early in their relationship Hunt came up with the idea that they should write a script to show, "delicately," how rich people are turned into Communists through the conspiracy of providing them with Socialist nurses, Socialist playmates, and finally "through conspiracy planned marriages and, for those not available for marriage, lovers." Having found a Communist in, rather than under, the beds of the wealthy, Hunt accounts for the last stage of man by reminding Poucher to put into the script that Socialists also "will not overlook the proper approach to win the senile" rich.

The Memo Barrage

Poucher's basic conflict with Hunt was nowhere more pronounced than in the area of how to raise money for Life Line. Noting that "the Bible is the bestseller, so somebody must be buying Bibles," the nostrum and grocery merchant decided to cut off a corner of still another market by offering a Bible, autographed by Poucher and with a Life Line broadcast schedule printed on the inside of the cover, "which we could sell delivered at twice the amount of the cost and delivery." Poucher put his foot down, protesting that the Hunt Bible wasn't worth more than half the $10 price tag. Buyers would be tricked, he said, for "the material which comes with the Bible will lead some to believe it is bound in leather. Of course it is not."

Successfully fighting off Hunt's suggestion that he ask for prayer offerings, Poucher warned that "the phrase 'prayer support' has become synonymous with every religious racketeer on the air." But Poucher had no sooner scotched that scheme than Hunt shot back a memo suggesting they manufacture Life Line bumper stickers for 5¢ each and sell them at two for a quarter.

Looking back to his stay with Hunt, Poucher summarizes it as "a running battle" against heavy odds. What chance, after all, did Poucher have? Hunt, who ironically insists, "I have a horror of running other people's lives," would sit in his Merchandise Bank citadel behind a solid phalanx of secretaries and fire memos at Poucher — four, five, sometimes six a day — like a skilled medieval bowman defending his castle from the rampsarts.

They came flying in on every subject — how Poucher could improve his dictation, how improve the show, how raise money, what to say and about whom:

Sometimes I thought it objectionable when you announced a "prayer to grant wisdom to those who are ruling the world." My reaction was that they were not desiring and also the prayer would be to no avail. . . .

Stop jazzing up the hymns. . . .

Senator Eastland will find prominent local right-siders and give a luncheon for organizing a Washing-ton committee (for the support of Life Line). . . .

What Goldwater states in his article in the Saturday Evening Post could be used for script, ascribing to him or not. . . .

Mr. Moseley is a very big man in the oil business. He should be courted extensively. . . .

Don't quote [Norman Vincent] Peale by name as he appears to be on the wrong side of the fence about three-fourths of the time. . . .

Suggest disclosing that there is a practically unrecognized pressure group which is the most evil of all — the big, pink money group — Mistaken Wall Street. The lesser evil minority groups such as union labor, negroes and racial groups do not need to be named. . . .

As great a fraud as social security is, and as evil as it is, I suppose 80 per cent of the people are for social security. It would be suicidal for Life Line to attempt to carry out a campaign against it. . . .

I hope that you will start a program directed at the gin rummy players, the chess players, checker players, golf players, tennis players, etc. You simply tell them about a more interesting game, "Matching wits with the Mistaken." . . .

Five per cent of preachers in the country are dedicated Communists.

I am dubious about your quoting Billy Graham. On the other hand it may be good. I am sure that he will be trying to cut your throat, and if you have made a favorable quote mentioning his name he may be then branded as an ingrate. . . .

I simply cannot get the saphead purchasers of time to use the commercials, except the Hunt campaign and one or two isolated cases. They are afraid of losing their respectability, I guess. If the sponsors will not begin advertising with the program, we are crippled. . . .

You may make a place for yourself in history alongside Washington, Lincoln, Lee and the greatest of all other Americans. . . .

Bruce Alger introduced a Life Line script in the Congressional Record. It would be better to use Senators for this and as liberal as possible: I am sure Ellender would put stuff in the Record and possibly Russell Long would. . . .

Please do not approach political action by talking about anyone voting! Should the listeners of Life Line become educated and aroused in a two-year period, they can be depended on to vote and vote right without hazarding our situation by talking to them about it. . . .

I was struck that you went pretty strong when you urged your listeners to support "their minister, their priest and their rabbi." I think it would fit better should you admonish them to support and cooperate with the "spiritual advisers in their church." . . .

We must try to get on a station covering every sizable college in the United States. . . .

It is not good to talk about "Dallas" too much.

While Poucher was trying to absorb all this tactical advice, Hunt was sending more strategic advice to Booth Mooney, a former member of Senator Lyndon Johnson's staff who had turned Washington writer for Life Line. Typical was a "schedule" of topics to be discussed and the number of days to elapse between discussions. Most attention was to be given foreign aid, United Nations, taxes, the State Department, the Supreme Court, urban renewal, immigration laws and unions.

Still, Hunt didn't trust his Washington staff to get the job done. He went hunting scripts elsewhere: scripts on the debt limit from Senator Byrd, scripts on saving the oil-depletion allowance from his own lawyers, a specialty script, "Profit Motive in the New Testament," from his right-hand adviser Sidney Latham, scripts in general from Frank Howley, vice president of New York University, scripts on labor racketeering from Senator John L. Mo-
Clellan, scripts on conservatism from Clarence Manion, John Birch Society national council member.

But Hunt's solicitation of Senator Karl Mundt is most revealing in this regard. Officers of the Life Line Foundation have steadfastly insisted that no effort is made on their broadcasts to influence legislation, for they know that one of the basic rules for foundations wishing to preserve their tax-exempt status is that they keep out of the legislative process. Again and again, Hunt counseled Poucher to avoid "recommendation legislation," to call instead for "reform." In his "Dear Karl" letter to Mundt, however, he is more brazenly to the point. The legislation Hunt wanted passed (to be introduced by Mundt) would change the structure of the electoral college.

Hunt writes: "It will take you all of ten or twelve minutes to dictate script for a seven-minute commentary. Four and one-third pages typed, double-spaced script fits a seven-minute spot. If you will do this you will indeed throw out the Life Line and Life Line will get the electoral college broadcast under way. They will also need an additional script on the subject about every eight or ten days until it becomes the law. This is the advantage of Life Line." (Emphasis supplied by Hunt.)

Using that statement as touchstone, the fundamental question of whether the Life Line Foundation has been concerned in a substantial way with propaganda or legislation — either of which would be disqualifying for tax-exemption — could be answered with little effort by the Internal Revenue Service.

Hunt Passes the Plate

If the Internal Revenue Service should ever decide to put out that little effort, it will come upon several other interesting questions. For instance, between 1953 and 1956, Placid Oil Co. (a Hunt corporation) of Shreveport, La., spent more than $23,000 on "subscriptions" to Facts Forum News. Did the company have 11,500 names specifically in mind or did it mean for the money to go into a general subscription fund? In either case, if Placid put this down as a tax-deductible "business expense," the IRS might inquire as to how a company uses propaganda leaflets to explore for and sell oil.

Similar questions could be asked of the $5,000 spent in one year on "subscriptions" by the New Seven Falls Co. of Colorado Springs and the $33,000 spent that way by the First National Bank of Dallas in two years (It is known that the First National specified as recipients several hundred Church of Christ and Baptist ministers in the Dallas area. That's "bank business"?) And these are considerably topped by the $100,000 "subscription" contribution put up by H. L. Hunt himself in one year alone.

Something is fishy. If one ignores subscriptions from individuals, and adds up only the company subscription purchases for 1955, it's enough to sponsor a circulation of 90,000 — which is 50 per cent more than Facts Forum ever claimed to circulate!

As the files of the Internal Revenue Service will reveal, 114 such big-money backers contributed more than a quarter of a million dollars to Life Line and Facts Forum in this way. The IRS has not yet received — and apparently has not yet demanded — a full accounting of how this money was spent.

It would not be nice to suggest that Hunt ever obtained tribute money from his suppliers in the oil business. But when one finds in the list of donors of either straight cash or subscription money so many companies that sell oil field equipment, service and piping — Baker Oil and Tool Co., Harry Bass Drilling Co., Blanton Drilling Co., Brinkerhood Drilling Co., Continental Supply Co. ($35,000), Empire Drilling Co., Hudson Engineering Corp., Mid-Continent Supply Co., National Geophysical Co., United Tool Co., to name but a few — one is forced to conclude at least that Hunt's kind of patriotism makes a special appeal to people associated with the petroleum business.

Representative Wright Patman's 1953 study of tax-exempt foundations notes that one of the preferred methods for confusing the already confused examiners as to the use of funds is for the foundations to give money to one another. Hunt's foundation has also benefited from this kind of interlocking charity.

Bright Star Foundation of Dallas, which won a tax-exempt status only after taking its case to court, was set up with oil money and chartered to do oil business. It was also chartered as a "charitable and educational" organization. By a rather threadbare coincidence, it has made its most generous grants to date to Life Line Foundation, Inc. The First National Bank of Dallas has lent heavily to Bright Star, the First National Bank of Dallas is a faithful sponsor of Life Line ($33,000 in three years for "subscriptions" alone), and Robert H. Stewart, III, a director of Bright Star, is also president of the First National Bank. With such cooperation, Life Line could lose its tax-exempt status without peril, donors could go right on giving to it in a tax-exempt way through the charitable activities of Bright Star.

When Poucher left Life Line in a huff last year, he broadly hinted that there were all sorts of things about the foundation that might interest the revenue people. Poucher's suspicions had first been aroused by something he found out about the organization's postal permit.

In 1959, Life Line Foundation, Inc., caused an application to be filed with the Post Office for a second-class mailing permit of the kind commonly granted to "exempt" organizations. Why the application was not obtained in a straightforward way, as it doubtless could have been, has never been explained. Instead, the application stated that Life Lines, the newspaper, was sponsored by a Baptist church in Miami, Fla., and a Methodist church in Trout, La. The permit was quickly granted and became worth an estimated $20,000 (minimum) a year to Life Line, Inc.

Then doubts began fermenting. Private individuals asked the Post Office to look behind the application, but up through 1962 it stoutly refused to do so. Then Poucher
found out that one of the "sponsoring" churches did not exist and that the other, if it existed, did not answer its mail. He told the Life Line board of directors he wanted no part of such a setup, but before he could quit on that count, Congressional insistence made the Post Office investigate and the second-class permit was canceled.

Then Poucher began looking into the organization's financial records more closely. He discovered that HLH businesses advertising with Life Line were not paying the same rate of fees as were paid by local advertisers around the nation. In fact, he found that HLH companies were not paying any fees at all on some stations.

A private research group in Washington, after studying Life Line's reported income from the sale of tapes and from talent fees, has estimated that Life Line sponsors are paying only from one-half to one-fifth as much for their advertising as are backers of other radio shows. The significance of this bargain radio time is that most of the sponsors of Life Line are Hunt food companies. By Hunt's own account, HLH food and drugs have spent up to $100,000 a month in supporting Life Line. Although Hunt insists that there are hundreds of other Life Line advertisers, anyone who has followed the program knows his HLH foods carry the major financial load. Even if the Hunt enterprises pay the radio stations full rate for their time, but not Life Line, Inc., its appropriate talent fees, as Poucher charges, then obviously HLH foods use the staff, resources and talent of Life Line at a tax-free rate to promote and advertise their products.

The IRS and the FCC may be baffled by the complexity of this reasoning, but Hunt himself does not share their puzzlement. He candidly views Life Line and HLH Products as one and the same venture. Asked recently how much he had spent on Life Line in the last five years, he said, "It probably hasn't cost anything. As advertising, it's paid for itself." Advertising, that is, for HLH Products. It fits in with Hunt's philosophy: "Patriotism is always profitable."

Hunt's friend, the Reverend Criswell, sees the food and drug gambit in a different light. "He's picking up the $100,000 a month tab on Life Line in the name of his food companies, I know that," said Criswell. "But he's building up the goods to give a front of legality to the program. Mr. Hunt is no grocer." Criswell wistfully added, "I'd give my soul if I could get Mr. Hunt interested in something else."

Dan Smoot has estimated that Facts Forum had received for nothing $5 million worth of "public service" time on radio and television. How much has Life Line received? Senator Warren Magnusen asked Newton Minow, then chairman of the FCC and Minow answered that he didn't know and couldn't find out without polling 4,500 stations. This was a clever, diversionary tactic; but the truth is that Minow would have had to poll only 331 stations — the number that broadcast Life Line.

"Public service" time, of course, carries no commercials, but in a way it is still advertising, because Hunt has so identified Life Line with HLH Products that now, for many people, to hear one is to think of the other, just as there was a time when to hear the Hit Parade was to think of Lucky Strike or to hear Ma Perkins was to think of Oxydol.

However, the FCC has shown itself just as reluctant to interfere with Hunt's opinion outlet as has the IRS. Supposedly, the FCC enforces a "fairness doctrine," which requires radio stations that present opinions on one side of a controversy to make time also for opinions on the other side.

But radio stations WKUL of Cullman, Ala., and WARF of Jasper, Ala., carried a Life Line program that was highly critical of the nuclear test-ban treaty. The chairman of the Citizens Committee for a Nuclear Test Ban Treaty demanded equal time, and the stations appealed to Ben F. Waple, secretary of the FCC, for a ruling. What they got was most reassuring: "If it is your good faith judgment," Waple said, "that the public does not need to hear the pro-test treaty tape, "then your obligation pursuant to the 'fairness doctrine' has been met."

Behind the maze of financial patronage and broadcast practice lies still the question of Life Line's tax-exempt status as an "educational organization" program. The Nashville school board answered the question to its own satisfaction last year when it unanimously rejected the request to put the tabloid Life Lines in their schools.

Surprisingly, some within the inner circle are in agreement. Life Line adviser White says quite openly, "I think they (Life Line) try to put out the right kind of propaganda for a particular point of view." Propaganda was also what Angelo Santos, an agent for the Baltimore Internal Revenue office, called it. After studying all the radio transcripts for a year in detail, Santos ruled that Life Line is no "educational organization" but a propaganda mill churning out "unsupported opinion."

On the basis of Santos' report, the Baltimore office recommended that Life Line be dumped from the list of tax-exempt foundations. As yet this recommendation has not been carried out, and even if it is, Hunt can make several long-term appeals, taking his case eventually to court. Of his victory there Hunt feels confident because, as he is fond of saying, "I've been in court 280 times and never lost a case."

Which means that Hunt will probably be throwing out the Life Line for some time. For many who listen in, this will mean a source of weird and unintentional humor as when one Life Line commentator solemnly avowed that the founding fathers would have turned down the idea of urban renewal.

But for millions of others, who believe they are listening to an educational program, the message must often be fearfully disquieting. Representative Hays believes Life Line "is so well disguised that a person who just listens casually might take it as gospel."

What reaction toward his government and its officials must such a person get who hears the gospel proclaim: "We can never afford to forget the nature of the opposition — entrenched in power, dedicated to their own twisted doctrine, experienced in reaching and subtly shaping public opinion, and given confidence by thirty years of almost unbroken success. Freedom can win over such adversaries only through a clear understanding of the issues—of truth and falsehood, right and wrong. . . ."

What must the casual listener
think today when he is told, "The Mistaken propagandists say they are against 'extremism,' but that is not really true. They are just against 'extreme patriotism' or 'extreme pro-Americanism' — and to them any patriotism is extreme and any degree of pro-Americanism is extreme."

Or what must the casual listener think of his government's efforts to come to grips with unemployment when he is told it is all in vain and that there is only one way, sacred in its simplicity. "If we all obeyed the divine command to be truthful and not to covet and steal, the problem of unemployment would be greatly mitigated or altogether solved."

Hunt — who has said the last decent President was Calvin Coolidge and that the Executive branch has been going downhill ever since — indignantly denies that the patriotism of Life Line could in any way help create an atmosphere of confusion or one congenial to violence. "If the Constitution of the United States could incite to assassination," he said, looking out his office window and across the pros- perous towers of Dallas, "then Life Line could incite it."

Hunt the loner is no longer alone. Sharing the adversity of embarrassment, the rightists of Dallas, joined by their friends across the nation, are closing ranks. Peter O'Donnell, the Dallas spark plug of the Gold-water campaign in Texas, has told many people he knows things about the Kennedy episode too terrible to speak of, which the Johnson Administration is covering up because it would place the blame where it belongs. Clarence Manion says he is in touch with "many friends in Dallas" who assure him that Earl Warren is behind the cover-up and that "when the truth is out, I would not be surprised to find some link with the dope traffic from Red China." He would not explain.

E. M. (Ted) Dealey, publisher of the Dallas News, which greeted Kennedy that day with a full-page ad alluding to treachery in the Administration, now stands shoulder to shoulder with Hunt in denying any part in preparing the tragedy. Perhaps Dealey has forgotten that a few years ago he was quoted in the Corpus Christi Caller-Times as calling Hunt a "latent Fascist." And patriot-commentator Dobbs probably speaks for all present and former employees of Life Line when he argues, with the logic of certitude: "No one who listens to Life Line could do such a thing. It [killing Presidents] isn't part of our pro-freedom plan."

Whatever the merits of these arguments, possibly this fellowship's best stratagem under the circumstances was laid down two years ago in one of the old man's memoirs. It is a stratagem that has kept Facts Forum-Life Line going for more than a decade under the thinnest veneer of public service, one that has kept most of the nation from knowing where the money and the impetus came from. In the words of Mr. H. L. Hunt: "It is not good to talk about Dallas too much."

De Gaulle's World View . . . . . . Alexander Werth

Paris

That loudly heralded press conference is over, and the first reaction was that de Gaulle said "nothing new." But if this were really so, why should everybody still be talking about it? why should the French press go on, day after day, speculating on what exactly the President meant about this and that, the while reprinting whole pages of comment from the world press? No doubt the establishment of diplomatic relations with Communist China had already been announced, and there was, therefore, nothing quite so explosive in de Gaulle's recent statement as in his press conference of a year ago, when he suddenly vetoed Britain's entry into the Common Market. Nevertheless, commentators the world over have continued to mull over the words — whether about the future of the French constitution, or about the future of Europe, or about that "sympathy and respect that France and China feel, deep down, for each other."

The French Communists were thrown into great confusion by this Chinese question. L'Humanité felt obliged to report that in Moscow de Gaulle's decision to recognize Peking was regarded as being in the interests of world peace, but editorially it said that, although recognition of China was something the French Communists had demanded ever since 1949, there was no doubt that "for de Gaulle China is, besides France, the only great power not to have subscribed to the test-ban treaty and that, in recognizing China, he wants to prop up his anti-peaceful-coexistence policy."

L'Humanité also charged that de Gaulle was cynically attempting to strengthen his own international position, gambling in this connection on "the divergencies existing between China and other Socialist countries." The Russians, however, do not seem to be much ruffled. On the contrary, the news from Moscow suggests that de Gaulle's proposal for a neutralization of Southeast Asia is very much in the "Moscow" line — much more, indeed, than in the "Peking" line. That this may be so is suggested by the absence of any comment, so far, from Peking on the neutralization aspects of de Gaulle's position.

In the same period, Russian reactions to the latest "palace revolution" in Saigon have been very sharp; General Nguyen Khanh is represented as an American stooge, ready, at Washington's behest, to go to any lengths to wage war against the Viet Cong. Le Monde partly confirms this by saying that Khanh "regarded the triumvirate of Generals Minh, Don and Kim not only as halfhearted in its conduct of the war, but also as seriously affected by the evolution of French policy in Asia." It had been expected for some time, says Le Monde, that the "neutralist" tendency at Saigon would gain the upper hand, especially since General Van Vy had recalled from France his friend General Nguyen Van VY, widely considered as "the Trojan horse of de Gaulle's neutralist policy," and had appointed him Deputy Chief of Staff. Now that the opposite has