

C O P Y

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Analysis

This evening Mr. Paul Hoffman confirmed the regrettable news that he is stepping out of government service. Just recovered from a serious operation, Mr. Hoffman will depart his job as Chief of the Marshall Plan administration, probably to become director of the Ford Foundation.

Paul Hoffman will long be remembered in this capital, not only because he successfully administered the enormous task of resurrecting the economic civilization of half-ruined Europe, but because he became a kind of classic example of the businessman in government. A classic example because it was a completed two-way process. He demonstrated how an able businessman can make government work, and in the doing, government demonstrated how it can make an able businessman grow. There would be more regret at his leaving, were it not that he leaves behind, his less prominent but equally competent deputy, Mr. William Foster.

Many top leaders of business came to Washington to aid Mr. Roosevelt after those earliest New Deal days, when only the professors would come. Businessmen came readily to Roosevelt, because of the national crisis and because of his personality; and in spite of his apparent social philosophy. Mr. Truman's personal leadership has not been an equal attraction to men of business and he has complained often enough of the difficulty of getting them. Those he did get, or those who stayed, men like Hoffman, Harriman, Forrestal, Lovett or McCloy -- these have been a special kind of businessman, with a different idea about government. They represent a little revolution in business thinking, which springs, strangely enough, from the New Deal days, and not from the war alone. They learned not to share the firm and often ferocious conviction of their business colleagues that the New Deal was a plot to destroy private business. Had they believed so, they would hardly have



joined Roosevelt or his philosophical inheritor, Mr. Truman. Without trying to read their minds, I think it would be accurate to say that they understood that even the early New Deal was designed to preserve American capitalism, not to destroy it.

They were too able and successful as individuals to suffer emotional phobias about their future. And too successful, I think, to be any longer content with the rewards of business achievement. Whatever the private financial sacrifice involved, government office, with its fame, its power, its direct relationship to the fate of millions -- this was something more -- heady and challenging, and with a task well done, enormously satisfying to the best and deepest instincts in any men.

In a way, the success of men like Hoffman represents a curious paradox. In great part, he succeeded, because congressmen trusted him; and, in great part, they trusted him because he was a businessman. Had he been a government servant by career, with the same energy, ability and personality, they would not have trusted him half so much. Hoffman, the man of plain facts, satisfied one side of the congressman's nature -- his intellectual sense of reality. Hoffman, the ex-president of the Studebaker Company, satisfied the other side, the emotional side of feeling and phantasy.

It is a paradox. All great American universities teach courses in public administration, government service, and encourage young men and women to make it their career. Maybe, with the Congress in mind, they should be instructed, instead, to seek success in private business first, if they would have real success in government. But perhaps that process is beginning already, because of the hysteria on the loyalty issue. It is time for reflection when the head of the University of Chicago feels obliged to inform his students that he cannot advise them any longer to seek government careers, given the restrictions and humiliations now involved. Time for reflection, and perhaps, for a small prayer, in the interests of our future leadership.