



## **Chamber of Commerce of the United States Change Agent Since 1912 – Part 3**

**By Erica Carle**

Americans are joiners. They love to be 'accepted'. Being a member of a group that has national or international blanket connections makes most of them happy. If the connections claim to speak for them, that's OK. They assume the decision makers are working for the welfare of all members. However, the larger the organization the more impossible that becomes.

The Chamber of Commerce of the United States and the International Chamber of Commerce are blanket organizations. The U. S. Chamber claims to represent more than 3 million businesses and organizations. Of course, the Chamber can't really represent them. It represents itself while claiming the membership sanctions its policies.

It is easier for Congress to enact legislation if there is a large pressure group calling for passage. No group can apply the pressure more effectively than the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. Congress recognizes the Chamber as the voice of business. Over the years, while claiming to be in favor of free enterprise, the Chamber has advocated the following legislation and policies.

DECEMBER 23, 1913 - President Wheeler and a chamber committee urged before the Senate Banking and Currency Committee the establishment of a Federal Reserve System.

JULY 1937 - The International Chamber of Commerce, organized in 1920, is bringing together the business leaders of all countries for the exchange of ideas and it is building an economic foundation under the many movements for world peace...

It has united with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in a Joint Committee which is studying the sources of raw materials and finished products of the world, and is drafting a program to aid political leaders in making adjustments essential to world peace and prosperity...

As this is being written, a delegation of distinguished Japanese industrialists, economists and financiers, is visiting the great industrial centers of the United States, inspecting their factories, becoming acquainted with their managers and studying American industrial methods...

As regards world peace, it is the interdependence of nations that will eventually triumph over all obstacles; and on this score certainly the outlook is encouraging...

We recognize now the underlying economic causes of war and depression. And we are going about the removal of those causes by organized means and mutual understanding which did not exist two decades ago. The world industrial system is complex, and changes must be made slowly and carefully. Despite some turbulence of the surface waters, the strong under-currents today are favorable.

Article in the July, 1937 Issue of IBM's THINK magazine by F. W. Nichol, Vice President and General Manager of IBM. (NOTE: Less than five years later the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.)

AUGUST 1945 - The basis of the relationship between the International Chamber and the projected Economic and Social Council is set forth in Article 73 of Chapter 11 (NOTE: Now Art. 71, Chap. 10) of the Charter of the new World Security Organization which reads as follows:

"The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations, under consultation with the member concerned."

There is a lot more in that phraseology than appears on the surface. This is the first time in the history of diplomacy that governments have invited the representation of private enterprise to take part officially in their councils, and it is precisely here that the International Chamber of Commerce can come in as a consultative body and ...can participate in the discussions and making of policy by governments."

THINK Magazine; Article by Winthrop Aldrich, President, International Chamber of Commerce; Published by IBM August 1945.

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1970 – COMMERCIALIZE MEDICAL PROFESSION? - The National Chamber's Special Committee on the Nation's Health Care Needs began its study of health care problems and ways to cope with them... One of the most serious problems is the need for structural changes in delivery of personal health care services, and the need to provide incentives for health preventive and maintenance services.

WASHINGTON REPORT, Sept./Oct., 1970.

NOVEMBER 1970 – COMMERCIALIZE EDUCATION - Among innovations which the National Chamber's Board of Directors believe should be carefully studied and considered are:

- \*Flexible school calendars and extended school years.
- \*Performance contracting which allows school boards to turn over teaching and/or school services to private industry.
- \*Cooperative work-study programs which can more fully use the community as an educational resource and give young people a taste of the real work world.
- \*A voucher system or other programs to involve parents and citizens in judging the results of education and to inject competition into the educational system as an incentive for innovation and efficiency.

\*New and modern managerial techniques in purchasing, warehousing, maintenance, utilization of plant facilities, food processing, transportation, personnel and human relations.

U.S. Chamber of Commerce's WASHINGTON REPORT, November 30, 1970.

FEBRUARY 1975 - NATIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SUPPORTS REGIONAL GOVERNMENT -- 'Something very fundamental has changed about our communities,' Clinton Morrison, National Chamber chairman, told the Toledo Area Governmental Research Association. '... 'The true communities of interest may not exist on the basis of neighborhoods any longer. Instead, there may be a stronger community of interest between people scattered through a metropolitan area who work in the same industry or who make their living in similar ways. ...One helpful approach to these changed conditions, which the National Chamber supports, is the creation of regional governments to tackle regional problems,' Mr. Morrison said.

Mr. Morrison, a Minneapolis banker and civic leader, urged business people to play an active part in the creation of regional governments. WASHINGTON REPORT 2/16/75.

2001 – CHAMBER SUPPORTS UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - The WBCSD has joined forces with the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) to create Business Action for Sustainable Development (BASD). This initiative brings together the world's major business organizations under one banner in the interests of sustainable development.

World Business Council for Sustainable Development

AUGUST 30, 2002 – Business has come to Johannesburg with a range of partnerships for sustainable development.

ICC Environment and Sustainable Development

SEPTEMBER 2002 – The ICC is joint coordinator of the Business Action for Sustainable Development (BASD) which spearheaded business preparations for—and presence at—the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

Yearbook of International Co-operation on Environment and Development

November 9, 2009 – COALITION FOR EDUCATION TAKEOVER - "Education is the one issue that can and must bring us together," said Secretary of Education Arne Duncan at an event co-sponsored by the Center for American Progress, the U.S. Chamber of

Commerce, and Frederick M. Hess of the American Enterprise Institute on Monday. . . the organizations announced today that they were united in addressing a massive education crisis . . . Over the coming weeks and months, CAP, the Chamber, and Frederick M. Hess of AEI will be meeting with policy makers around the country—and from both sides of the aisle—to try to bring their goals into reality.

Leaders and Laggards Center for American Progress