

Eye on Washington by A. Lazzaroni

Kemp bluffs on Lincoln, fakes on JFK

Efforts by the former Congressman to claim Abraham Lincoln for the "free trade" camp ran into opposition from EIR.

Luminaries of the Conservative Revolution were chagrined and embarrassed to see former Congressman, cabinet officer, and football star Jack Kemp caught lying and bluffing, as he spoke at a Feb. 26 American Enterprise Institute (AEI) bash-the-welfare-State forum in Washington, D.C. Kemp declared U.S. President Abraham Lincoln to have been a devotee of Adam Smith, and an advocate of the self-help policies peddled at the forum by such mammon worshippers as Michael Novak and Mrs. Arianna Huffington. Kemp tried to position himself with Emancipator Lincoln as two fellow free-marketeers, versus protectionist Pat Buchanan, with his racism and chauvinism.

When Kemp finished this performance, he called on *EIR* correspondent Anton Chaitkin for a question. Chaitkin said that the anti-racist Lincoln was the leader of the statist faction of the statist Republican Party; that throughout his life, Lincoln fought for high tariffs and a National Bank; and that Lincoln undoubtedly hated Adam Smith.

Chaitkin, a historian, is the author of the book *Treason in America* and of a recent *EIR* series on the real history of the American Revolution and the American System of political economy.

Kemp had earlier spoken of his upcoming debate with House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.). But now Kemp said, "Well, the next debate is going to be between Anton and me. Anton, Lincoln wasn't for a high tariff—he had a 4% tariff."

Chaitkin said, "No, Lincoln doubled the tariff levels from those of his

free-trade predecessor James Buchanan, to about 42% average rates." Kemp now looked about the room, pleading, "Could somebody please bail me out on this?" Nobody did.

Chaitkin continued, that Lincoln had revived the policies of Alexander Hamilton and had created widespread private property and built U.S. power through giant "giveaways" and massive government intervention. Kemp responded, "Well, not everything Lincoln did was right."

An AEI regular then tried to help by asking: If Kemp could not stop the intruder Pat Buchanan from usurping the nomination of the party of Lincoln, would Kemp form a third party? Kemp gave a lame response, and finished by telling a lame joke. He then turned to Chaitkin and snarled, "Anton is not laughing. Chill out, Anton!" As he made his way out of the dining room, Kemp came up to Chaitkin's table, grinning, shook his hand and said loudly, "We'll continue this later."

Two days later, Kemp returned to the American Enterprise Institute for a debate on tax policy with Congressman Gephardt. Before the start of the debate, Kemp cheerily and effusively apologized to Chaitkin for "misstating the facts on Lincoln." He said he had read a Feb. 27 *New York Times* op-ed by Alfred E. Eckes on the Republican Party's historical advocacy for protective tariffs. Kemp said that Eckes's article showed him that Chaitkin had been right.

Kemp proceeded to the rostrum and opened up the debate by proclaiming that President John F. Kennedy had cut taxes for the rich, just as Kemp would do, and that's how Kennedy had

created jobs and balanced the budget. During the debate, Kemp repeatedly and deceptively invoked Kennedy, with the implication that JFK had had the same approach as Kemp does—namely, give more money to the rich, and keep the government out of the way!

Representative Gephardt neither corrected Kemp nor referred in any way to President Kennedy and his activist government. But Gephardt criticized the 1980s Reagan tax policy favoring wealthy investors, saying this had not created jobs, as Kemp had alleged. Gephardt called for lower taxes on workers, a simplified tax code, and maintaining a high tax on capital gains.

Kemp, meanwhile, spoke on behalf of the "flat tax" favored by half-billionaire Steve Forbes, and advocated the elimination of all taxes on capital gains—so the rich will have "more money available to invest in jobs." Kemp conceded that under President Reagan's tax program, the government budget deficit had increased, but "not relative to the growth of GNP."

The format of the debate did not permit questions from the floor. Following the debate, Chaitkin asked Gephardt whether he favored John Kennedy's investment tax credit, through which the government directed investors to build factories and create jobs. Gephardt said no, tax credits are "too messy," that the investment tax credit "gets crazy"—but that he favors a rapid depreciation allowance, allowing companies to quickly write off new investments in plant and equipment.

Kemp then walked by and apologized again for misrepresenting Lincoln. He was asked if he favored President Kennedy's investment tax credit. Kemp answered, "No credits!" and strode out of the room.