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'BREAKING WITH MOSCOW': AN EXCHANGE

Editor's note: In his best-selling memoir, Breaking with Moscow, the former Soviet diplomat Arkady Shevchenko describes a colorful career spying for the United States before his defection from a high United Nations post in April 1978. In our issue of July 15&22, we published an article by Edward Jay Epstein asserting that many of the details in Shevchenko's story are demonstrably false, and casting doubt on Shevchenko's claim to have been a valuable spy for the United States.

In addition to the following letters from Shevchenko's editor and from the producer of a "60 Minutes" presentation of his story, an anonymous representative of the Central Intelligence Agency telephoned TNR and several other news organizations with the following statement: "Shevchenko provided invaluable information to the U.S. government. The CIA had nothing to do with writing the book." Finally, on July 31—a month after the article was released—Shevchenko himself held a press conference at the National Press Club in Washington, denying Epstein's charges.



DRAWING BY MICHAEL C. WITTE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

chenko accomplished *before* the end of 1975." It is illogical to assume that Shevchenko would not discuss what the Soviets had done in the months before his defection. Epstein further claims: "There is no real evidence that whatever valuable information supplied came before rather than after his defection." But several people in positions of knowledge, including Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Admiral Stansfield Turner, have refuted that allegation,

not have considered approaching John Scali about his defection in late 1975, because by then Scali had been replaced as U.N. ambassador by Moynihan, but that he thought about revealing himself to Scali early in 1975, and not as he had written.

What Epstein omits is equally instructive as to his line of attack. He disregards Moynihan's published and broadcast support of Shevchenko. When

asked on "60 Minutes" of his evaluation of Shevchenko, Moynihan said: "For the first time we got an understanding of how Soviet foreign policy is made and how it is operating." Your readers are free to choose the more reliable authority. . . .

It is only fair to ask what Epstein is trying to prove. That the CIA wrote *Breaking with Moscow*? (The agency officers are portrayed as manipulative and sometimes insensitive.) That the book is a piece of CIA disinformation? (The hawks in this administration might not appreciate Shevchenko's conclusion that we must continue "to seek reasonable and practical accommodation" with the Soviets.) That Shevchenko was not a CIA informant for more than two years? (Various American officials whom Epstein apparently didn't interview have attested to Shevchenko's bona fides.) Or is Epstein trying

To the editors:

Edward Jay Epstein's "review" of Arkady Shevchenko's *Breaking with Moscow* is so riddled with errors, misrepresentations, and leaps of judgment that one scarcely knows where to begin a rejoinder. But having talked to the author, as well as to knowledgeable authorities, we are convinced that Shevchenko's memoir is reliable. . . .

The *New York Times* on July 1, 1985, effectively demolished several of Epstein's charges; others of his accusations reflect attempts to strip Shevchenko of his verisimilitude. For example, Epstein writes: "The book details a wealth of espionage coups [Epstein's word] Shev-

and the CIA has issued a statement that Shevchenko "provided invaluable intelligence to the United States government."

Of Epstein's many charges we have been able to find only two with any validity, both minor confusions in chronology. He is correct that the dinner meeting between Shevchenko, Boris Solomatin, and Georgy Arbatov could not have occurred in 1976, but Shevchenko told me after reading the Epstein article that it did take place in 1975, at a time when Arbatov was certainly pondering the 1976 elections, especially given the political fallout after Watergate. Shev-

to connect Shevchenko to his favorite espionage subjects, Yuri Nosenko, Fedora, and Top Hat, all of whom manage their way into his article, and all of whom will presumably people his own book on disinformation that he is writing for Simon and Schuster?

However much Epstein has tried to damage Shevchenko, he has not made a case. *Breaking with Moscow* stands as an extraordinary memoir, and it will survive Edward Jay Epstein's bizarre fulminations.

ASHBEL GREEN

Continued Editor-in-chief, Alfred A. Knopf