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# Producer Buys Rights To Shevchenko Book

By EDWIN McDOWELL

Motion-picture rights to "Breaking With Moscow" by Arkady N. Shevchenko, the best-selling memoir of the highest-ranking Soviet official ever to defect, have been purchased for \$450,000 by Lester Persky Productions.

"Right now we're getting a script, contacting key directors and we hope to begin shooting this fall, in time for release next year," said Mr. Persky, who has produced "Hair," "Yanks," "Equus" and some 20 other motion pictures.

## Concoction Is Alleged

The Shevchenko book, which has been on The New York Times best seller list for 18 weeks, and is the No. 5 nonfiction best seller, has come under sharp attack in a cover article in the current issue of The New Republic. Edward Jay Epstein, the author of the article, charged that Mr. Shevchenko, the former Under Secretary General in the United Nations Secretariat, made up important parts of the book, with the apparent complicity of the Central Intelligence Agency. Mr. Epstein described the book's espionage episodes as concoctions, and said, "The book belongs on the fiction rather than the nonfiction

list."

Mr. Epstein's allegations were formally denied by the C.I.A. as well as by Stansfield Turner, who headed the agency at the time Mr. Shevchenko defected, and Ray Cline, former deputy C.I.A. director. Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat of New York, reiterated that Mr. Shevchenko, who said he spied for the United States for almost three years before defecting in the spring of 1978, "was working for us for a period until that rather dramatic moment" of his defection.

## More Than a Spy Story

Mr. Persky said that the formal C.I.A. denial of the Epstein charges, and the support given to Mr. Shevchenko's charges by Senator Moynihan and by former intelligence officials, is evidence that the book is factual.

The producer, who completed the purchase agreement on June 17, after two months of negotiation with the author, said that it is not just the spy story that interests him. "Shevchenko didn't want to engage in espionage," Mr. Persky said, "all he wanted to do was leave the Soviet system. The story as I see it is the torment of the man who has to decide to leave the land he loves because he just couldn't take it any more."