NEW REPUBLIC
15 & 22 July 1985

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The invention of Arkady Shevchenko, supermole.

THE SPY WHO CAME IN TO BE SOLD

BY EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN

ARKADY SHEVCHENKO, the under secretary general who mysteriously defected from his post in the United Nations Secretariat some seven years ago, reemerged in February on CBS's *60 Minutes* in a new role: a Le Carréan supermole. While ostensibly working as a United Nations bureaucrat, he was, the report revealed, the CIA's most successful spy. "Nothing like it had ever before occurred," it was authoritatively reported. For the quality of his access to Soviet state secrets, he was compared to "Al Haig, when he was deputy to Henry Kissinger." The broadcast further disclosed that this espionage coup had been such an extraordinarily closely held secret that no more than five men—including the president of the United States—had known about it.

Shevchenko was portrayed equally graphically the next morning on the cover of *Time* magazine, which featured a gaping man-size hole in the brick wall of the Kremlin. In the dramatic breach, below an exposed red hammer and sickle, the cover line read: "A Defector's Story: The highest-ranking Soviet diplomat to break with Moscow since World War II describes the Kremlin's inner workings." The special section inside was condensed from Shevchenko's book *Breaking With Moscow*, and imaginatively illustrated with artist's renderings of his espionage career.

Breaking with Moscow
by Arkady N. Shevchenko
(Knopf, 378 pp., $18.95)

It was, according to *Time*, "far more than a true-life spy story. . . ." *Time*'s executive editor described it as "windows on history." To further enhance its credibility, Strobe Talbott, *Time*'s Washington bureau chief, noted on the publisher's page: "Those of us working on the project thought it important to verify the bona fides of the author and, as far as it was possible, his story." The lead paragraph began dramatically with Shevchenko's disappearance from the U.N. on "Friday, April 6, 1978." (In fact, Friday that year fell on April 7.) With this bold send-off, the film rights were quickly sold for a half-million dollars, and the book itself rose to the top of the best-seller lists.

It was not always, however, such a success story. Originally Shevchenko's value as a source of reliable information was much more modestly appraised. In October 1978—after Shevchenko was filmed by NBC News in a Washington restaurant with a call girl named Judy Chavez, to whom he had paid most of the $60,000 that he received from the CIA as his annuity—*Time* reported that "the CIA has been relatively lax with Shevchenko because he has been far less valuable as an intelligence source than had been anticipated." The magazine concluded, based on its intelligence sources, that "he had little knowledge of the inner workings of current Soviet policies or intelligence operations."

This assessment was shared in the intelligence community—at least in 1979. For example, analysts at the Defense Intelligence Agency, with full access to the "take" from what Shevchenko had told his FBI and CIA interrogators, concluded that the defector had nothing of value to offer American intelligence, aside from some dated biographical material. Book publishers, moreover, were similarly disappointed. In the summer of 1978 Simon and Schuster signed a $600,000 contract with Shevchenko, who was then represented by Morton Janklow, for a book tentatively titled *From Captivity into Freedom*. When the manuscript finally was submitted in 1979, Richard Snyder, the head of Simon and Schuster, and Michael Korda, the editor-in-chief, concluded that it did not contain sufficient new material about the Soviet Union to merit its publication. There were no revelatory firsthand conversations with Soviet leaders—and no mention of any espionage activities by him. In addition to rejecting the book, Simon and Schuster successfully sued Shevchenko for the $146,875 it had actually advanced him. Even with $600,000 at stake, however, he was not willing to claim he was a mole. When he was deposed by Simon and Schuster's lawyers in December 1980, he still steadfastly maintained that he had accurately described his defection in his chapter "Decision to Defect," which made no mention of any espionage activities on his part.

The book was sent next to the Reader's Digest Press. Steven Frimmer, the editor-in-chief, also concluded that it lacked both substance about the workings of the Soviet system and personal vignettes. Before rejecting it, however, Henry Hurt, the star investigative reporter of *Reader's Digest*, intensively interviewed Shevchenko for some 20 hours to ascertain whether Shevchenko could add, possibly with his collabora-

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