

TRENTONIAN (TRENTON, NJ)
20 August 1985

Spy Story

Arkady Shevchenko's "true-life spy story" sounds like cloak-and-dagger best-seller fiction — and there are those who now say that's just what it mostly is: fiction.

Shevchenko's best-seller, *Breaking With Moscow*, is a riveting account of how he was a spy for the CIA while serving with the Soviet's U.N. delegation. The book, to which movie rights have been bought, also gives a dramatic, detailed account of Shevchenko's 1978 defection.

But now, critics are suggesting the book should be listed under fiction — not non-fiction. The most specific challenge to the book comes from Edward J. Epstein in a recent *The New Republic* article.

On a host of points involving dates and other variable information, Epstein finds Shevchenko's story sorely lacking in credibility. Epstein finds no evidence of the speeding



ticket Shevchenko tells of receiving in the New York suburbs during a dramatic chase scene.

He finds an account of a dinner with a KGB official in New York when the official actually at that time was in Moscow and no longer assigned to New York.

He finds "cinematic" details, such as long, revealing, verbatim-quoted talks with Khrushchev, that were not in manuscripts submitted to and rejected by other publishers.

Shevchenko finally called a press conference and denounced the criticism as "ridiculous" and "terroristic journalism." But his denial, while vocal, was extremely vague — in contrast to the very specific criticism.

There have been published reports that Shevchenko received literary help from the CIA. What is disturbing about this controversy is not that one more writer may have "hyped" the truth to "juice up" sales.

What is disturbing is the suspicion that the CIA may have had a hand in a bit of a public relations flimflam to boost its image among Americans. The CIA is paid to play the *other* side for suckers, not us.

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