correction of one sentence in the December 7 editorial. It said that the statement that "one cannot expect the works of Marx and Lenin to solve today's problems" should have read "all of today's problems." Officials told reporters that the editorial should have put more stress on the continuing importance of Marxist principles. It was disclosed that it was based on a talk given by Hu Yaobang, the chief of China's Communist Party. It was described as "a firmer expression of ideas that China's leadership has been voicing since 1978."

WHO WAS RIGHT, THE WASHINGTON POST WHICH GAVE THE STORY LESS IMPORTANCE THAN A NEW Zealand protest against two French nuclear tests, or those papers that saw the Peking editorial as a historic turning point? The Washington Inquirer put it in proper perspective, quoting Dr. Richard V. Allen, former national security adviser to President Reagan, as saying that the demythologizing of Marx and Lenin in an official publication of a communist regime is "a remarkable and unprecedented event." But Dr. Allen and former Congressman Walter H. Judd both agreed that it would be premature to assume that the Chinese Communists are abandoning their dictatorial control of China's billion people. Dr. Judd said the whole situation in Asia would change if China were to permit democratic elections and the liberalization of the economy and that we would have to wait and see if they moved in that direction. Dr. Allen pointed out that a few years ago "Democracy Wall" in Peking was hailed as a harbinger of new freedom of speech. Today the wall is just a memory. Personally, I don't think the editorial heralds the democratization of China and the surrender of power by its tyrannical rulers. The abdication of power by communists is without precedent, but everyone knows that the rulers of the communist countries know better than anyone else that Marx's ideas are unworkable. What is important about the Peking editorial is that it is the first public admission of that fact by a communist regime. This should be given maximum publicity not only because it is "man-bites-dog" news, but also because millions of people around the world, including many in the United States, are still deluded into thinking that Marxism is superior economic and social philosophy. They are entitled to know that a country that has shed rivers of blood trying to make Marxism work has finally acknowledged that it doesn't work and that a country that tries to make it work will lag behind in the economic race. The Washington Post definitely missed the boat. I have written to the publisher to ask why, but I don't find it surprising that a paper whose foreign editor is on record as saying that most Western journalists regard the leftist guerrillas as "the good guys" would treat this Chinese story as it did.

OUR STORY IN THIS ISSUE DEALS WITH A COMPLAINT THAT THE CIA HAS FILED AGAINST ABC with the Federal Communications Commission. The CIA action has generated quite a lot of comment in the media, much of it saying that the CIA ought not to do this. The L.A. Times quoted a libel attorney as saying that the agency is supposed to "fight speech with speech," giving its side of the story to the media and not to "use the courts or other agencies to punish alleged falsehoods." One trouble with that is that the media have not shown any great interest in publicizing the true facts in this matter. The charges of deep CIA involvement in the Rewald firm and in illegal activities connected with it have been kicking around in the media since last April, when the Wall Street Journal spread the charges in a front-page story. I sent a letter to Norman Pearlstein, managing editor of the Journal, pointing out a serious flaw in the story. There was no correction, and Mr. Pearlstein didn't even respond to the letter. In May, CBS aired two programs on the case. In one of them, they said baldly: "CIA agents claiming to be Bishop Baldwin employees traveled worldwide, negotiating a major arms deal with Taiwan...a deal the U. S. Government couldn't make openly..." I wrote to CBS about this on June 6. I received a reply August 29 which pronounced the program accurate and fair. The letter said that CBS had included interviews with persons who presented a variety of views. One of them was the editor of the notorious CounterSpy magazine, John Kelly, who was presented as an expert on the CIA. CounterSpy is a far-left publication which used to specialize in exposing the identities of CIA agents. Kelly's credibility would have suffered if CBS had identified him properly, or even if they had shown him in profile, revealing the long ponytail he wears.

Barnes tried to interest a number of journalists in his story of this second mission. One that he is said to have contacted was Ted Koppel of ABC. Alan Dawson notes: "Most of them took his stories with the same truckloads of salt I did. He finally had to peddle his Thailand adventures to leftist publications." Those publications were The Daily World, the organ of the Communist Party, USA, and Covert Action Information Bulletin, a small circulation publication spawned by the turncoat Philip Agee, which carried out Agee's wish to identify and expose American intelligence agents working abroad. Dawson said: "TASS, the Vietnam News Agency and communist publications interested in denying Soviet involvement in the use of chemical-biological warfare in Indochina and Afghanistan have helped CAIB and the Daily World spread the story of the highly questionable Scott Barnes."

Brushing Off the Denials

The CIA rarely responds to charges against it, but this ABC report was too much. It denounced the report as "irresponsible journalism," saying: "The allegations are totally false and are insulting not only to the CIA but to the U.S. system of justice that has been examining the case. As ABC knows, the CIA, along with the rest of the U. S. government is prohibited by law from engaging in or contemplating assassination. ABC should make whatever evidence it has available to the Justice Department."

ABC refused to run the complete CIA statement, but on "World News Tonight" on September 26, anchorman Peter Jennings read the following statement: "Last week on this broadcast, we told you the story of a man named Ronald Rewald and about his undercover work for the CIA. One man that we identified as working for the agency said he was asked by his CIA contact to kill Rewald. The agency denied any such thing and repeated requests by ABC News for more comment on what we knew about the Rewald story were denied. Well, the CIA has now made a public statement, and it says in part that we, ABC News, wrongly accused the agency of attempted assassination and other improper practices. Our report, says the CIA, contained false and distorted statements. We stand by our story, and the investigation continues."

CIA Seeks FCC Help

Dissatisfied with that response, the CIA took the unprecedented step of filing a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission on November 21, 1984. It submitted a 22-page complaint charging that ABC had violated the Fairness Doctrine and the Personal Attack Rule when it "falsely and without foundation alleged that the CIA conspired to assassinate American citizens and committed certain other unauthorized and illegal acts."

The complaint said that the CIA had met with ABC officials on three occasions to demonstrate that their broadcasts were "erroneous and had not been adequately researched and prepared." It said that ABC refused to take appropriate corrective action, saying it stood by its story even though it was "well aware that its broadcast was flawed." Saying that it was not trying to have the FCC censor ABC, the CIA argued "that when a major news network embarks upon an investigation and broadcasts charges of such serious and far-reaching implications as those involved here, that network must act responsibly and take appropriate corrective action when it learns that it has made an egregious error." It went on to say that when the network fails to take appropriate action to correct its error, "it is clearly within the province of the FCC as the agency charged with regulation of the airwaves to step in and order measures appropriate to safeguard the public interest."

The FCC was asked to order ABC to take corrective action, including retraction of all false accusations made about the CIA. The complaint also suggested that the FCC should take its findings into consideration when broadcasting licenses for stations owned by ABC were up for renewal.

The complaint made it clear that the CIA considered the ABC broadcasts to be libelous, knowingly "falsely conveying the impression that the CIA engaged in heinous and illegal acts." It said this passage from a column by AIM Chairman Reed Irvine was "of the greatest relevance" to this complaint: "ABC knows that the CIA can't sue and that it is safe in airing wild stories about it floated by men whose credibility is unknown." It charged that the libel was repeated on September 26, when Peter Jennings aired the statement saying ABC was standing by its original stories, after "the highest ABC officials had rejected the factual showing by the CIA."

The complaint said: "The evidence presented here demonstrates that ABC had decided from the inception of its inquiry into the Rewald matter that the CIA was the talisman of evil and distorted its news report to support its 'conspiracy' theory, that it had made no effort to verify sensational claims, that it presented evidence known by ABC officials to be false, and that it intentionally and deceptively edited to create false impressions."

ABC's Grudging Admission

Peter Jennings reported on the filing of the CIA complaint with the FCC on "World News Tonight" on November 21, reading this statement: "The CIA has admitted involvement with Rewald, but it strongly denies one aspect of our report. We interviewed a former prison guard named Scott Barnes, who charged in a sworn statement that the CIA has employed him and planned to kill Rewald while he was still in prison. The CIA said Barnes' charge was totally false and denied any relationship with him. ABC News continued to investigate and asked Barnes for further evidence to support his charge. He was unable to provide it. We made other efforts to corroborate his charge and they also failed. Finally, we asked Barnes to take a lie detector test but he refused. ABC News has now concluded that Barnes' charge could not be substantiated, and we have no reason to doubt the CIA's denial. After notifying the CIA that we were going to make this clarification, the agency late this afternoon filed the complaint with the Federal Communications Commission, which said our report was distorted and violated the Fairness Doctrine."