

A. D. COLEMAN

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December 29, 2005

Michael Brintnall, Executive Director
American Political Science Association (APSA)
1527 New Hampshire Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036-1206

Dear Mr. Brintnall:

In the citation for Richard H. Solomon as recipient of the 2005 Hubert H. Humphrey Award from the APSA, as published at your website (www.apsanet.org/content_20645.cfm) and presumably disseminated internationally as a press release, I find the following:

"Solomon, a crack photographer who appreciated the power of visual images, also published an original book of photographs and text, *A Revolution Is Not A Dinner Party*."

This is simply false. Not a single one of the images in this book -- *A Revolution Is Not A Dinner Party: A Feast of Images of the Maoist Transformation of China* (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1975) -- was made by Solomon himself, as a perusal of its list of picture credits makes clear. Furthermore, I can find no evidence anywhere that Solomon himself ever made photographs for publication, or has demonstrated any skills as a photographer.

Anyone who values the truth must find disturbing the fact that Solomon endorsed this false claim on his behalf by failing to correct it in your encomium. In permitting this untruth to enter the record he tacitly takes credit for images made by Marc Riboud, Henri Cartier-Bresson, René Burri, and many other photographers from within and without China. He should be ashamed of himself.

What this suggests about the commitment to scholarship, research, and factual accuracy of the American Political Science Association's Award Committee -- Michael Lipsky, Georgetown University, chair; Pauline Luong, Yale University; and Susan Shirk, University of California, San Diego.-- is better left unsaid.

Clearly, whoever wrote this citation is either incompetent as a researcher or duplicitous. No less clearly, in accepting this award with its accompanying citation Richard H. Solomon contributed knowingly to the considerable misrepresentation and exaggeration of some of his credentials and accomplishments. This disgraces all concerned in your award process. That the award in no way depends on Mr. Solomon's fictitious photographic work makes this all the more perplexing on the parts of all concerned.

In short, the APSA has embarrassed itself woefully with this award and its specious claim to "crack photographer" status on its recipient's behalf. I am sure that, now that you have the facts at your disposal -- easily verifiable by reference to a copy of the book in question -- you will review the award itself and its accompanying citation, issuing, at the very least, a corrected version of the citation along with formal public apologies from yourselves and Mr. Solomon for this deception.

As a critic and historian of photography, I speak on behalf of the many photographers

whose work Mr. Solomon has claimed as his own in asking that you set the record straight in regard to the appropriate credits for the images used to illustrate Mr. Solomon's 1975 volume. As a scholar and researcher myself, as well as a journalist, I look forward to your investigation of this situation and your full, frank, public disclosure of the results. (The obvious questions to start with: Where did this false claim of Mr. Solomon's photographic skills and achievements originate -- with your awards committee, or with Mr. Solomon himself? And, if he did not initiate this gross misstatement, why did he not correct it?)

I submit this letter for publication in the *American Political Science Review* or another of the APSA's publications, whichever you consider most fit for a careful examination of the various issues raised by this misrepresentation of your awardee's accomplishments. I assume the pages of your publications are open to such discussions.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. D. Coleman". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a double horizontal line.

A. D. Coleman

cc: Karpowicz, Polly, Director, Web and Publications