Photographs for the Tsar is as important for its historical content of prerevolutionary society as for its revelation of the unappreciated advances in color photography, the advanced techniques in color photography achieved by Prokudin-Gorskii. His experiments in with color photography during the first decade of the twentieth century, involving perfecting panchromatic emulsions, devising equipment for making separation negatives in the field, and inventing projection methods, have largely gone unnoticed in Europe and America. Neither Prokudin-Gorskii nor the French chemist Maumene with whom he did research in color photography in Paris in 1893 are mentioned by Beaumont Newhall in The History of Photography published by the Museum of Modern Art in 1964. Color photography is treated rather sketchily by Newhall which reflects the general disdain of its various processes by serious photographers by which it was regarded until very recently by serious photographers.

When one considers the technique Prokudin-Gorskii used to make separation negatives of natural scenes and groups of people it is astonishing that the reproductions printed from these negatives here are as good as they are. The motion of his subjects, whether vegetation or people, between the three exposures is clearly visible in areas of misregistration and I think the publishers were right in not attempting to correct these defects are to be commended for not attempting to cover up these defects.

This book is an important photographic work and a valuable contribution to the history of the international development of photography. Thank you for giving it to me

STATEMENT BY ELIOT PORTER

When color film became available in the forties, it was not highly regarded by those photographers who practiced photography as an art. They disparaged color photography as too literal a medium for personal interpretation, which only black and white photography permitted. In color photography one was simply copying nature, whereas in black and white the hews of the subject could be rendered in almost any desired tone of gray, thus allowing a wide range of interpretation.

As my color photography shifted from the portrayal of birds for proper identification to other nature subjects, I began to realize that their appeal depended very largely on the subtleties of color lost when the subject was rendered in black and white; and when I began to make color prints it became apparent that almost infinite possibilities, contrary to the assertions of the disparagers of color, were available for interpretation and individual expression. Why, I wondered, was the remarkable attribute of color vision, not shared by all vertebrates, treated with such disdain by photographers alone in all the fields of art. Perhaps it is because they feel least secure in their chosen medium and are, by raising restrictive barriers, immuring themselves against invidious comparisons.

Color photography has today become much more generally accepted as a legitimate art, but it has not yet entirely freed itself from an inferiority complex as the self-conscious and self-justifying workshops in color photography indicate. Color perception, color appreciation, color theory, color dynamics, color as a medium, color in the natural scene, are taught as though color in photography were a different phenomenon from color in painting.

To say that because a photograph is in color it is less creative than one in black and white is to manifest a poverty of perception no less egregious than to condemn photography as a whole because it is the product of an optical instrument. I suspect that if color photography had been invented before black and white, the situation would be reversed.

Tonight a plane left a flame-red, wavy vapor trail amoung the pink clouds as it fell slowly towards the horizon under the pale green evening sky. That streak of grimson was modern man's contribution to the beauty of the sunset, and it was not insignificant.

Very early in my career I discovered that complacency is detrimental to the realization of one's potential, and that self-satisfaction undermines the promise of native ability. Disregard of the first precept leads to disappointment and of the second to humiliation. But if one recognizes that perfection is illusory, although improvement is possible, then failure should serve as a stimulus to continued striving which, by virtue of the satisfactions derived from the effort invested, mitigates discouragement.