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### Preface

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## Preface

Since World War II, a strong evolutionary growth have taken place in the Chemical Sciences in various Latin American countries. In the first tier of publications one finds Mexico, Brasil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Venezuela, with several other countries appearing less frequently. As would be expected, the fields of chemistry commanding most interest were those involved with the natural resources available in Latin America and with the welfare of its citizenry. Thus, chemical pharmacology, the chemistry of metal extraction, the chemistry of natural products rose to prominence together with food chemistry and various chemical aspects of quality assurance, water supply, etc. The interest in Polymer Science and, specifically, Polymer Chemistry started somewhat later with an initial strong emphasis on polymers from natural sources, as can be expected.

At present, practically all the Chemistry papers coming from Latin America originate in Universities and a few other research institutions. It is hoped that with the economical development of Latin American countries and broader intra- and inter-national recognition of the scientific capabilities available in academia, research organizations will be created by the various industries in Latin America, either individually or on the National scale, and these will contribute ever more to the global scientific literature.

National and Regional Chemical conferences started being organized at regular intervals since World War II. The Jornadas Chilenas de Quimica (Chilean Days of Chemistry), take place every other year in a different location around this beautiful country. In the present issue of the Journal, several Polymer-related papers are presented from the latest conference, the XXI Jornadas Chilenas de Quimica. Similarly, the regional Congreso Latinoamericano de Quimica (the Latin American Chemistry Congress) takes place every other year in a different country. The last one, XXII Congreso Latinoamericano de Quimica, took place in Concepcion, Chile, January 7–12, 1996, concurrently with the latest Jornadas. Previous Latin American Chemistry Congresses took place in Panama (1994), the Dominican Republic (1992), Argentina (1990), Chile (1988), Colombia (1986), Brasil

(1984), and Puerto Rico (1982). In the joint XXI Jornadas/XXII Congreso of January 1996, there were 517 participants and 575 papers were presented. From these, there were 332 Chilean participants and about 350 papers of Chilean origin presented. Naturally, the languages of the oral and poster presentations are either Spanish or Portuguese, but other languages are often heard in Jornadas, spoken by participants coming from out of Latin America.

All branches of chemistry were presented, including Macromolecular and Biological chemistry as well as Biotechnology. The total number of papers dealing with polymers was about 80. The following papers are typical, but for the fact that they were written in English, and are presented here as representative of Latin American Polymer Chemistry. It is my great personal pleasure to present these papers to the English speaking world.

SHAUL M. AHARONI

Guest Editor,

Morris Plains, New Jersey, May 1, 1996.