

PREFACE

Statistical molecular theories of electric, magnetic, and optical saturation phenomena developed by S. Kielich and Piekara in several papers in the late 1950s and 1960s clearly foreshadowed the developments of the next thirty years. In these volumes, we as guest editors have been honored by a positive response to our invitations from many of the most eminent contemporaries in the field of nonlinear optics. We have tried to give a comprehensive cross section of the state of the art of this subject. Volume 85 (Part 1) contains fourteen review articles by the Poznań School and associated laboratories, and volume 85 (Part 2 and Part 3) contain a selection of reviews contributed from many of the leading laboratories around the world. We thank the editors, Ilya Prigogine and Stuart A. Rice, for the opportunity to produce this topical issue.

The frequency with which the work of the Poznań School has been cited in these volumes is significant, especially considering the overwhelming societal difficulties that have faced Prof. Dr. Kielich and his School over the last forty years. Their work is notable for its unflinching rigor and accuracy of development and presentation, its accessibility to experimental testing, the systemic thoroughness of the subject matter, and the fact that it never seems to lag behind developments in the field. This achievement is all the more remarkable in the face of journal shortages and the lack of facilities that would be taken for granted in more fortunate centers of learning.

We hope that readers will agree that the contributors to these volumes have responded with readable and useful review material with which the state of nonlinear optics can be measured in the early 1990s. We believe that many of these articles have been prepared to an excellent standard. Nonlinear optics today is unrecognizably different from the same subject in the 1950s, when lasers were unheard of and linear physics ruled. In these two volumes we have been able to cover only a fraction of the enormous contemporary output in this field, and many of the best laboratories are not represented.

We hope that this topical issue will be seen as a sign of the ability of scientists all over the world to work together, despite the frailties of human society as a whole. In this respect special mention is due to Professor Mansel Davies of Criccieth in Wales, who was among the first in the West to recognize the significance of the output of the Poznań School.

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*Charlotte, North Carolina
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