

sium, complaining about the situation. Only then did the Israeli scientists receive circulars.

The 3rd circular stated the IUPAC sponsorship implied that entry visas would be granted to all bona fide scientists as long as they applied three months in advance. On July 5, 1983 (over six months before the Symposium), Drs. I. Goldberg and J. Rockem, of the Department of Applied Microbiology of The Hebrew University (Jerusalem), sent their abstracts and registration forms to New Delhi. They specifically requested information as to how and when they could obtain their landing permits since no Indian mission is present in Israel. They received a letter back, dated July 16, from the Symposium secretary, Dr. A. P. Joshi, stating that the National Organizing Committee was taking up the matter "at the highest level." On August 17, Goldberg and Rockem again wrote and provided requested information on the Israeli scientists who wanted to participate in the meeting. For the next two months, nothing was heard from India.

In mid-October, Rockem received word that his poster was accepted but nothing about visas. On October 19, Rockem wrote Joshi that December 15 was listed as the final date for acceptance of reservations and payment for accommodations in New Delhi, but the Israelis had heard nothing about visas. A copy of this letter was sent to Dr. H.Ø. Schlegel (Göttingen, West Germany), chairman of the International Committee of Economic and Applied Microbiology (ICEAM), to alert him to the problem. ICEAM was to meet during the Symposium and Goldberg was Israel's representative to this committee. On November 29, Schlegel wrote to Ghose (who is vice-chairman of ICEAM), complaining about the visa situation, insisting that Goldberg had to be at the meeting, and warning that "neither IUPAC nor ICEAM can sponsor and fund meetings which are not open to scientists all over the world." He specifically requested that landing permits be granted to Goldberg and Rockem.

At this point, I was unaware of what was going on and thus was making plans for my own trip to India. Early in January, I received an appeal (dated December 15) from Goldberg and Rockem for assistance. Copies of the letter had also been sent to Schlegel and Ghose. I was very disappointed and sent a telex on January 5 to Ghose stating clearly that unless Rockem and Goldberg received visas, I would not go to India.

On January 6, Rockem received an unsigned letter from Sabhash Chand, joint secretary of the Symposium. The letter did not grant Rockem landing rights but merely stated that the Committee was taking steps toward that goal. This letter was clearly inadequate for an airline to allow him to buy a ticket and board. What was needed was a letter clearly stating that a visa would be granted upon arrival. Several telexes were sent from Israel to New Delhi explaining this need.

Finally, on January 27, Goldberg received a telex from Ghose advising the Israelis to go to Cairo, Rome, or London to apply for their visas. It didn't say that their visas would be there—only that Indian embassies in these cities were informed of the situation. By this time, all the Israelis except Rockem had given up the possibility of attending the meeting—transportation would cost much more than expected, and they were still not guaranteed of receiving visas. Rockem's effort was stopped when Alitalia went on strike in Tel Aviv.

With regard to my own situation, I waited until the last moment, ticket in hand by my phone, hoping that I would get some good news from Israel or India. It never came. I finally gave up and telexed both Ghose and Schlegel that I could not come to India in good conscience. Apparently, the messages never got to these people because colleagues at the Symposium told me that no information was presented to the participants concerning my reason for not being there. For a person who takes his commitments to lecture as seriously as I do, this was a final depressing blow.

I only hope that this letter will serve to prevent such harassment of scientists—from any country—in the future. Clearly, we should never tolerate such government interference in our international scientific conferences.

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HYPE VERSUS RESPONSIBLE DISCLOSURE

To the editor:

Your June editorial, "A Little Secrecy Goes a Long Way," raised some interesting and pertinent issues

for which the writer, Arthur Klausner, is to be commended. However, his assertion that companies such as Immunex release information to "hype" their stock should not go unchallenged.

In his editorial, Mr. Klausner refers to the beginning of clinical trials of interleukin-2, a flagship product for Immunex. At the time of our public offering, less than a year before Mr. Klausner's article, IL-2 was our dominant product; our main source of revenue and our main expense. Indeed, the prospectus for our offering discussed the IL-2 project extensively.

As Mr. Klausner should be aware, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission requires that material information be disseminated to shareholders and the general public in a timely fashion. In our view and that of the SEC, the clinical trials for a company's first and dominant therapeutic product is material.

By releasing information on projects of major importance, particularly in the year following our initial public offering, we are complying with the legal requirement to let shareholders and the public know the progress we're making. Initiation of clinical trials is just one of the steps taken in that development process. If Mr. Klausner thinks reports of such trials are "sexy" or "hype," he is seriously mistaken.

In our press releases and in our contacts with the media, we do stress the precautionary aspects of our business—the long lead time in getting a product to the market, the uncertainty and risk involved. Despite these efforts, the media often come to premature conclusions or focus on the more dramatic aspects of the product being discussed.

Furthermore, press releases do not produce high stock prices. Indeed, if higher stock values resulted from press releases, most companies would save their information for release when the market was bullish and more receptive to high technology stocks. The SEC, however, would frown on such behavior.

We agree with Mr. Klausner's assertion that hype is undesirable in this industry. That is not the same, however, as informing one's investors and the general public. Mr. Klausner should learn the difference.

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