

*From Nature, Vol. 322, p. 679*

## **Turkey maligned**

SIR-Nechemia Meyers (*Nature* 321,801; 1986) claims that visas had been denied by the Turkish Foreign Office to Israeli scientists seeking to take part in the Subcommission on Triassic Stratigraphy's field workshop (of whose organizing committee we are members) in Western Turkey between 14 and 23 July 1986. It seems, however, that Meyers was not particularly well informed, for Dr Mordeckai Magaritz of the Weizmann Institute, to whom a visa had allegedly been denied, had left Israel before a visa could be issued to him. It was subsequently requested that his visa be sent to him in Milan, Italy, where he was attending the meeting on the Permian and Permo-Triassic boundary in western Tethys held in Brescia, Italy, between 4 and 12 July. The Turkish Foreign Office obliged him, thanks to the timely intervention of Dr Remzi Akkök, but Magaritz then claimed that it was too late for him, although it was certainly not too late to attend the meeting in Turkey. Two other Israeli scientists, Dr Baruch Derin and Dr Tuvia Weissbrod, not only obtained their visas, but also attended the Turkish field workshop. One thus wonders whether there really was any difficulty associated with the visa that prevented Magaritz from coming to Turkey. Turkey is indeed cautious about issuing visas to foreigners for scientific work and visits. The reason for this is a long history of scientific plunder, first made famous by Heinrich Schliemann, mainly in such fields as archaeology, epigraphy and mineralogy, to which this country has been subjected. This has harmed not only Turkey but also science itself. No particular nation has therefore been immune to close scrutiny in this regard by the Turkish Foreign Office and there is no reason why Israelis should be an exception.

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