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Spreading the message by UFO

Walt Secord

A SYDNEY movement which links creation with the arrival of aliens insists that its symbol — an entwined Magen David and swastika — was on the side of a UFO and therefore cannot be changed.

It also maintains it is not anti-semitic.

The Australian Raelian Movement — named after Claude Rael, a sports journalist who allegedly made contact with aliens in Southern France on December 30, 1973 — is based in Sydney and Newcastle and recently held a meeting at the YWCA in Darlinghurst.

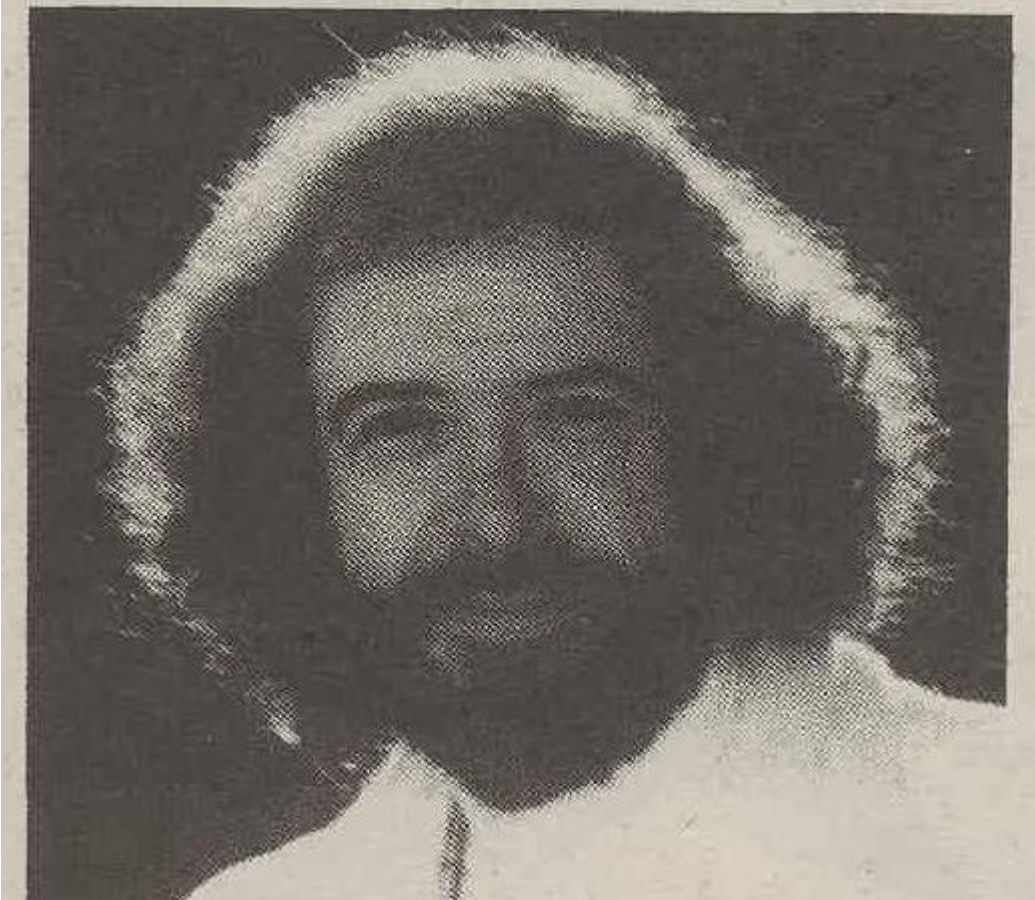
Mr Rael is due in Sydney on March 26 to give a public lecture at the Sydney Convention Centre and to launch the Australian section of the movement, which is hoping to establish an

ment, which is hoping to establish an "embassy" to welcome its messiah.

The International Raelian Movement is based in Geneva and operates in 33 countries. It claims to have 20,000 members.

Followers believe that aliens created life in an outer-space laboratory and were then brought to earth.

The group claims messages were given to certain people throughout history by Elohim (the Hebrew for God, but which the group believes means "those who come from the



Claude Rael

sky"); some of those who received the messages included Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed and Mr Rael.

ARM secretary Christopher Liger conceded that Sydney Jewry may find the movement's symbol objectionable, but insisted it is not meant to be offensive and ruled out changing it.

He told the *Australian Jewish News* that his organisation has encountered difficulties with Jewish communities, including one in Germany and another in Miami. "But we can't change this because it is what he [Mr Rael] saw ... we didn't create it. It [the symbol] has nothing to do with the Nazis. It was on the side of the UFO."

Mr Liger said the Raelian move-

ment has prepared literature to explain the symbol to Jewish communities. Montreal-based Canadian Jew Leon Mellul has been appointed as the Raelian "responsible for Jewish communities" and has produced material to explain the use of the symbol.

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Mr Mellul warns in movement material that the symbol "could offend many Jews!", but adds: "I would like to specify that the Raelian movement totally disassociates itself from any Nazi group for we are for peace and against any form of violence."

He defended the use of a swastika combined with the Magen David, saying "the symbol of the Raelian movement is the symbol of the *Elohim*, which is the oldest on earth. The Star of David represents infinity in space; the two entwined triangles symbolise the infinitely large and the infinitely small matter of which we are composed."

"The swastika is a religious symbol in India and represents infinity in time. Unfortunately, Hitler used the swastika to change the course of history and to do evil."

Founded in Sydney on December 13, 1990, ARM has 10 active members. They also have "sympathisers" in Perth, Brisbane and Melbourne.