

Report on Rael Press Conference in Las Vegas, 3/11/97

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Subject: Report on Rael Press Conference in Las Vegas, 3/11/97

I attended a press conference today with "Rael," the leader and prophet of the Raelian religious movement, who was announcing his plans to build an "embassy" in Jerusalem for the alien race he has been in contact with.

Rael, whose given name is Claude Vorilhon, is a former French journalist who says he was contacted by aliens in 1973 and 1975. They convinced him to become the messenger for their cause and gave him the name "Rael".

My previous information on the Raelian movement came from a report on the "Now It Can Be Told" TV magazine, aired Apr. 2, 1992. At the time, the symbol used by the group was a swastika inside a Star of David -- the obvious source of some controversy. According to Rael interviewed on the program, the symbol was meant to represent the group's all-inclusive love. The Raelians were dressed in white, meditated often and seemed to have liberal attitudes toward sex -- the more the better.

Now Rael himself stood before me, dressed in a white outfit with a medallion around his neck, speaking about his past alien encounters and his plans for the future.

The press conference took place in a meeting room at the Flamingo Hilton in Las Vegas. There were about 20 people in the room total, with only three obvious members of the mainstream press: two people from the BBC planning a UFO TV series and a reporter from the Orange County Register. Four or five people seemed to be local representatives of the Raelian movement, also dressed in white. The others in the room asked no questions, and I could not discern their affiliation.

The press conference lasted about an hour and a quarter. Rael described his alien contacts, and a large model of the proposed embassy was revealed. Rael then took questions, which were mostly asked by the Orange County Register reporter in the front row. (In my opinion, he was emitting far too much negative energy, but Rael remained calm and courteous.)

Rael's demeanor could be described as "peaceful" or "saintly". He spoke with a French accent and occasionally seems to grope for words or mispronounce them. (Some of his mispronunciations seem to me to be strategically placed, as though he was using them to relax the room and give people an opportunity to correct him.)

He said the aliens would come back to earth only when we learned to shed our warlike ways, which we now seem to be doing. Although Rael talked a lot about meditation and love, he also provided a lot of specific facts and claims. Here are my notes on them in random order:

-- Rael has had two encounters with aliens, in 1973 and 1975. The aliens spoke to him in person by verbal means. All of the information he has about them came from these meetings, and he has not spoken with them since.

-- He calls the aliens the "Elohim", and he says that they created us in their own image.

-- Rael, born out of wedlock, claims to be the son of an alien. He says his mother was abducted by them on Dec. 25, 1945 (yes, Christmas day) and impregnated. His mother does not remember the incident, since the aliens wiped her memory clean, and she believed one of her boyfriends made her pregnant. (Rael did not say whether his mother still believes this.)

-- Jesus was also the son of an alien. When Jesus died and was

resurrected three days later, the new Jesus was actually a clone of the original one.

-- Rael spoke about cloning several times and referred to the recent case of the sheep "Dolly" being cloned. Rael says he is forming a company called "Clonaid" to promote human cloning in countries where it is legal. He also says that he will provide funding to any American company whose federal funding is cut due to President Clinton's recent order banning funds for human cloning.

-- Rael was formerly a journalist for "Racing Car Magazine" in France. His passion was race cars, and I think he also said he was a pilot. When asked by the reporter he did provide his given name.

-- His first alien encounter was on Dec. 13, 1973, at Clermont-Ferrand, near Lyon, France. He was driving to work when he felt compelled to turn toward a volcano 10 kilometers from the city. (His book says the volcano's name is Puy-de-la-Sola, which my Michelin atlas shows it about southwest of Clermont in the Regional Volcanic Park.) While he was in the crater of the volcano a bell-shaped metallic craft approached him in the fog. It was about 7 meters high. Initially, it was about 100 meters off the ground, but it closed to within 30 meters of him and about 2 meters off the ground. A trap door then opened in the craft a stairway descended. A single being then approached him, a small humanoid with large almond-shaped eyes. (When speaking, Rael held his fingers in a circle around his own eyes to show the configuration, apparently indicating a classic "gray" type alien.) The alien took him into his ship, where there were two chairs but no obvious controls. As a race car driver interested in technology, Rael was somewhat disappointed with this. Rael and the alien sat in the chairs and talked.

-- Rael met with the alien on six separate days for an hour each time.

-- Rael's only other communication with the Elohim was on Oct. 7, 1975. On that occasion, he spent 24 hours with the alien or aliens. (I did not get the details.)

-- All communication between Rael and the Elohim was verbal (not psychic). I asked Rael about this twice to be sure: All communication Rael has had with Elohim was in-person verbal communication. (I didn't ask what language the communication took place in. French I suppose.) This means that all of Rael's writings about the Elohim are based on a total of 30 hours of communication with them.

-- This was Rael's first American press conference regarding his proposed Raelian embassy in Jerusalem.

-- He acknowledged that the main difficulty with his project was to get the Israeli government to agree with it. He expected no funding from the Israeli government, but he did expect them to acknowledge this as a "real embassy" and grant it the same privileges of others. The embassy had to have "extraterritoriality", where the Israeli government could not arrest diplomats inside. It also had to have a "demilitarized airspace" overhead so the Elohim spaceship could land. The plans were somewhat flexible, however. Rael said the embassy did not have to be located in Jerusalem itself, but could be in the desert near Jerusalem. The Embassy would require a certain amount of land, however: 1 kilometer in radius.

-- A big model of the proposed compound was unveiled. The model was about 12-15 feet long and was displayed in a plexiglas case. Rael pointed out that the floor plan resembled certain crop circle formations. I wouldn't have noticed this until he mentioned it, but it was true: It was a series of circles connected together on a straight line (like this: =oO=oO=oO). Rael said the design was given to him in his 1975 meeting with the Elohim. Inside the compound there would be housing for the aliens, meeting room, reception room, dining room, conference room and a landing platform for the alien craft. There was also a swimming pool. Rael estimated that the embassy would cost \$20 million. He said that funding was not a problem, but that the permission of the Israeli government would be difficult.

-- The embassy has to be built by the year 2035, and apparently the aliens will not come to earth until there is an embassy ready to receive them. Rael said that he himself will not see the aliens again until this time. The reporter asked what would happen if the embassy was not built by the deadline, and Rael said he didn't know.

-- The choice of Jerusalem was made by the aliens, because this was the site of one of the 7 laboratories on earth where the aliens

created mankind. The aliens look a lot like us and come in seven races. Likewise they created 7 races of mankind in those 7 laboratories. Rael mentioned "white," "black" and "yellow" as three of the races.

-- The group's symbol appears in a three-inch medallion worn by Rael and the other people in white. According to an insert in Rael's book, the new symbol "has been in effect since the beginning of April 1992" -- which I note is the same time as the "Now It Can Be Told" Report. The swastika in the middle of the Star of David has become stylized so that it is not longer recognizable as a swastika. The change was made "with the Elohim's consent," which is strange, since Rael claims no contact with them since 1975. This also leave a bit of inconsistency, since the emblem appeared on the side of the Elohim ship when they first contacted Rael in 1973. According to the insert, "It goes without saying that the original symbol seen on the Elohim's spaceship will remain the emblem of the Elohim. It will be seen on their spaceship when we welcome their official arrival."

In other words, the swastika will appear inside the Star of David when the Elohim ship lands at the planned Embassy in Jerusalem. (I'm no diplomat, but I can't help but wonder how this will go over with the Israeli government.) Rael talked about the symbol at length and says it is a "symbol of infinity." He said the "Tibetan Book of the Dead" has the same symbol in it.

-- When asked about what approaches the Raelians have made to the Israeli government, Rael said that about 10 letters have been written to the Israelis in the past 23 years. The Israelis have responded courteously, but they have not granted permission for the embassy.

-- Rael says that Jesus, Moses, Mohammed and other great prophets were all the sons of aliens, as Rael himself is. The great flood mentioned in the Bible was actually orchestrated by the Elohim in an attempt to wipe the slate clean and start over with humanity. Rael said that Noah's Arc actually flew above the sea, not in it, and it contained all the genetic material for all animals on earth, not the actual animals. Rael explained that if you had put the actual animals in the arc, they would have eaten each other.

-- In the Raelian movement, there is a hierarchy of bishops and priests, with Rael himself at the top of the structure. Rael is called the "Guide of Guides", and he is elected to that position, apparently by followers or a ruling council, for a 7-year term. His current term expires next year.

-- The Raelian movement emphasizes "sensual meditation." When asked if this meant "sexual" meditation, Rael said no, although sex can be a part of it. The meditation is sensual in that the attempt is to open up all of ones senses to the world.

-- The Elohim are capable of faster-than-light travel. They live on two planets outside this solar system but within this galaxy. Rael says he does not know where these planets are located.

-- The Elohim look like us, although their features are somewhat oriental due to the homogenization of their races over the centuries. (This seems to conflict with the description of the "7 races" and the being with large almond-shaped eyes Rael met in 1973.)

-- Rael emphasizes that the Elohim are not supernatural, although their technology is far in advance of ours.

-- Rael says his book, "The Message Given to Me by Extra-Terrestrials" has been printed in 24 languages and has sold over 1 million copies.

-- Rael says the Raelian movement has 35,000 members worldwide in 84 countries. The majority are in France, followed by Japan and Canada.

-- Rael says he is not paid by the Raelian movement, and none of the other leaders are either. All of his income comes from sales of his books and from a wealthy benefactor.

-- Rael emphasized that his group is not a "cult". A cult tries to separate its members from society, whereas his group encourages people to be integrated with society.

-- When asked about his white clothes, Rael says it is simply his personal preference. He says it is not as important in America, where attire is more casual anyway, but in Europe, the light, comfortable clothing is in contrast to the stuffy "constipated" clothing people

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