

On Monday I received an email at the synagogue email address entitled: 'It this true? Concern for Christian Americans.' The text itself was titled, 'HOW THE JEWS ARE DESTROYING AMERICA.' In capital letters. It came from the email address of Robert Barlow in Atlanta. At first I thought it was a joke and I would quickly get to the punch line. I expected some of the usual stereotypes and lies that are spread about us ending with some clever refutation of them. A joke like that would have been in poor taste but I accept that some people think joking about Jews in this way helps us to deal with the real anti-semites who are in the world.

Instead I read a 900 word diatribe that was not a joke but an indictment of our people from every possible angle. For example,

'1. The Jews have emasculated our nation by destroying our pride in America's Christian history. Without a commonly held memory a nation ceases to exist as a cohesive unit...

'6. The Jews have pushed, created and profited from pornography and perverse entertainment. The 'chosen people' make up 90% of all American pornographers. The Hollywood they run has mainstreamed wife-swapping, common law marriages, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, transvestitism, pedophilia, drug and alcohol abuse and self-indulgence...

'9. The Jews have subverted our government. With Zionist control of the media, both print and television, the two major political parties have been steered away from the interests of the European-American majority, rendering us incapable of self-preservation. The war in Iraq, the 9/11 attacks and a possible clash with Iran in the near future, are all results of the Zionist subjugation of the most powerful nation on earth, and the prioritizing of Israel's concerns over those of the United States...

'Everything on this list can be easily verified. Jews, mostly Zionists, have spearheaded every movement that now threatens our destruction. Jews have extended their tentacles into all facets of our country squeezing every vestige of wholesome life out of America...

'What can we do to stop the Jews? Will we fear and quake before the buzzword of "anti-Semite" or will we stand and battle for the survival of Christian civilization? It's up to all of us to wage war against the Jews, especially we Christians, for America will either be a Christian America or a Jewish America. There is no in between!'

This is only one third of what it said.

I forced myself to read the entire email even though I felt sicker and sicker the more I read. I try very hard to stay away from these messages. Growing up in a very Christian city in Connecticut, I was inundated with anti-semitic messages, some addressed to Jews in general and other to me personally. At some point I decided not to read any more of these messages. I knew how sick and destructive they were and I didn't want anymore of them in my head.

But this one is different. This one came directly to my email address. While it wasn't meant for me personally, it was meant for us, for the Jews in our city at our synagogue.

This email was forwarded to the Anti-defamation League and to the Southern Poverty Law Center. I haven't heard from the ADL yet but I talked with Janet at the

Law Center this afternoon. She told me this email sounded familiar and she was going to do more checking to see which hate group it came from.

Not only did I feel sick after reading this email, I felt shocked and scared. I'm not naïve about how much we as a people are hated but usually we are protected from the daily rantings of these hate groups. But this time they found us. Even if it's just by email, they still found their way into my home, into our home.

I talked a few weeks ago about the National Social Democrats, the Nazis and their seeking official recognition by cleaning a half mile stretch of highway in Missouri. At the time I said that there were 40 hate groups in Georgia and 2 headquartered in Macon. The only states that have more hate groups than we do are California, Florida, Texas and South Carolina, a distinction I would rather not have.

Even if there is no overt physical threat from this email, the threat still exists. The very nature of this email, to spread outrageous lies which are supposedly verifiable, is to frighten us into either silence or assimilation.

We can't do that. We have to stand proudly and confidently in our city, our state, our country and practice Judaism. We have to teach our children how important practicing Judaism is to their lives and to the continuation of our people. We have to speak to people who aren't Jewish and let them know how we are threatened by anti-semitism and ask them to do something about it.

It's up to us as Jews to speak the truth every time we hear someone tell one of these lies. Our Jewish lives depend on it.

Shabbat Shalom.