

## RESEARCH SERVICES 1960-67: 'UNREMITTING VIGILANCE, PREPAREDNESS AND UNDERSTANDING'

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Research Services, an organisation formed in 1960 to combat antisemitism, has left little historical trace. There is no reference to it in general histories – no mention in Suzanne Rutland's *Edge of the Diaspora*, nor in her *The Jews in Australia*; no reference in the detailed discussion of antisemitism in Hilary Rubinstein's *Chosen: The Jews in Australia*, nor in her *The Jews in Victoria*. Bill Rubinstein's mammoth work, *The Jews in Australia: 1945 to the present*, provides a detailed discussion of Jewish anti-defamation activities from the early 1940s onwards, including more than 15 pages devoted to the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism, in existence from 1942 to 1972. His perceptive discussion charts the history of the Council and its decline in the context of its links to the world communist movement and its loss of credibility through its Soviet apologetics. In his balanced discussion, Rubinstein accords respect to the professionalism and achievements of the Council and contrasts it with the amateurism which characterised the work of subsequent anti-defamation activity:

When it dealt with the domestic Australian scene rather than with international matters it did an excellent job of identifying Australian anti-Semites ... It appears to have been considerably more sophisticated, better-informed, and quicker in response than those mainstream committees, organised and sponsored by the Boards of Deputies, which succeeded it, and it acted on a national rather than a state basis.<sup>1</sup>

Rubinstein contrasts the 'relatively sophisticated intelligentsia and activists of the Jewish Council' with the part-time amateurs, well meaning though they were, lacking 'sophistication, energy, resources' – in the case of some immigrants lacking even adequate command of English. Further, such successors to the Council lacked 'continuing files' and knowledge of the terrain – being part-timers, they lacked 'an "institutional memory" for individual anti-Semites or anti-Semitic groups', and most significantly they lacked the deep understanding necessary to evaluate levels of threat, future directions and issues impacting on 'major opinion-makers'. As a consequence, they often spent much time on 'trivial or petty examples of anti-Semitism'.<sup>2</sup>

In his broad analysis Rubinstein incorporated and built upon the groundbreaking research of Peter Medding, published in his 1968 book *From Assimila-*

*tion to Group Survival*. In common with the scholars mentioned, he indicated no knowledge of the work of Research Services. Medding conceptualised four phases in the approach of the Melbourne Jewish community in the fight against antisemitism. The first phase, from 1920 to 1942, was characterised by the desire to disappear into the mainstream of Australian society, a ‘fear of conspicuousness’; the second, from 1943 to 1951, saw ‘militant response’ to potential threat. During this phase there was a failure to ‘distinguish between anti-Semitic acts of a serious nature and those which were relatively unimportant’. The result was a tendency to inflate the seriousness of antisemitism, ‘creating the impression that ... [it] was far more virulent than it really was’.<sup>3</sup>

In the third phase, from 1952 to 1958, while stressing the need for vigilance, the Victorian Board of Jewish Deputies (VJBD) played down the significance of antisemitism. The emphasis shifted to the fostering of positive contacts with political and civic leaders, and work to create a favourable view of the contribution to Australian society of the Jewish community. In the fourth phase, beginning in 1959, labelled ‘Jews and the Open Society’, the Board continued and consolidated work to develop positive contacts, sought to contribute to Australian society and counselled moderation; pressures within the community for militant confrontations with antisemites, seen to represent the ‘lunatic fringe’, were resisted. Medding wrote that in the early 1960s the Board ‘acted in unison with the police, setting up special patrols to safeguard Jewish property and established a fact finding agency’. He did not elaborate on how the patrols were established, nor on the nature of the ‘fact finding agency’.<sup>4</sup>

This fourth period, the 1960s, and the immediately preceding years, have been described by Hilary Rubinstein as ‘something of a golden age ... Jewish life in Australia probably came as close to being untroubled by anti-Semitism as at any time in its history’.<sup>5</sup> Survey evidence from the 1960s indicates that this was a view held by contemporaries. A survey based on a random sample of nearly 300 respondents was conducted by Peter Medding in the second half of 1961. When asked about discrimination against Jews in Australia, only 3 per cent of respondents saw it as a serious problem, a further 6 per cent reported personal experience of light discrimination; when asked if they were accepted by Australians, 8 per cent replied that they were not accepted but had not tried to win acceptance; only 12 per cent did not feel accepted at all.<sup>6</sup>

A larger survey, with some 500 respondents, was conducted in 1967 in a project led by Professor Ronald Taft, Walter Lippmann and others. In this second survey, 41 per cent of respondents indicated that they had lived under Nazi rule in the period 1940–45, of whom 15 per cent were survivors of concentration camps; a further 15 per cent lived under the Nazis prior to 1940. Given their traumatic experiences, it could reasonably have been expected that more than half of the survey respondents would be extremely worried about the threat of antisemitism.

Yet when asked about the extent of antisemitism in Australia only 7 per cent indicated that there was a ‘great deal’ and a further 25 per cent that there was a ‘fair amount’, a total of 32 per cent. When respondents were asked about the major problems facing the community, antisemitism ranked fourth.<sup>7</sup> In contrast, when the next major survey was undertaken, in 1991, double the 1967 proportion (63 per cent) indicated that the level of antisemitism was serious.<sup>8</sup>

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The 1960s ‘golden age’ was the heyday of Research Services. Close to the fiftieth anniversary of its formation, recognition of the contribution of its hard-working volunteers is now well and truly due.

Research Services was registered on 23 February 1960 by its secretary, Una Kersey, as a business under the Business Names Act. It was indicated that the organisation was established on 23 December 1959, and the nature of the business was stated as ‘market and general research’. The place of business was initially a sixth floor office in Elizabeth Street, and subsequently in Flinders Lane, both located in the central Melbourne business district. The immediate stimulus for the organisation’s formation was a number of swastika daubings, neo-Nazis paintings of swastikas on building walls, a phenomenon that was seen at the time across major overseas and Australian cities.

In the Annual Report of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies for the Year ended 1960, I. J. (Isi) Leibler, then a young man of 26, and Chairman of the Board’s Public Relations Committee, noted that ‘Early in the year following the swastika daubings, the Board Executive set up separate machinery consisting mainly of VAJEX members to collate and build up comprehensive files on anti-Semitic groups in Australia’.

One of the organisation’s leaders wrote in 1974 that it had been formed at the request of Jewish leaders in Melbourne ... Mr Nathan Jacobson, OBE, was President of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies, and Mr Maurice Ashkanasy, CMG, QC, was President of the ECAJ ... In the early period members of Research Services were encouraged by statements of appreciation from the select few who were aware that the team was active and close cooperation was maintained by the Boards of Deputies in all of the states and with the ECAJ.

Its task was to undertake systematic information-gathering on antisemitic activities for the Jewish leadership. The organisation avoided publicity, seeing work behind the scenes, out of the public eye, as essential to its success. Internal correspondence indicated that there existed ‘a network of corresponding research teams channelling reports of anti-Semitic activities and organisations throughout Australia’. This seems to be something of an exaggeration, with most of the activists residing in Melbourne. A far less active Sydney branch was formed in 1967 but ceased to function in 1972.

The membership was recruited from ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen;

mainly, it would seem, the former: members of the Victorian Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women (VAJEX). It was at times assisted by members of B'nai B'rith, Jewish students and others, 'including some most helpful non-Jewish contacts'.

Until 1975 Research Services was a constituent organisation of the VJBD, as the result of an oversight. It was noted in 1975, at a time close to its demise, that the reference to Research Services within the VJBD constitution was 'a mistake and contrary to the fail/safe cover, under which we have insisted on working from 1960 onwards'.

There were up to 35 volunteers who gave their time to the Melbourne office in the early 1960s, including four who formed the leadership, three of them with a background in military intelligence. Alan Benjamin and Frank Slutzkin were listed as coordinators in 1960, together with Stanley Kliger, the first two together with Rudi Moser in 1970.

Alan L. Benjamin had served as a Captain in the Australian Intelligence Corps and as an instructor at the Land Headquarters (LHQ) School of Military Intelligence; Frank A. Slutzkin as Lieutenant Commander, Royal Australian Volunteer Naval Reserve; Stanley S. Kliger, a graduate of the British and Inter-Allied School of Military Intelligence, Cairo, as Warrant Officer, Australian Intelligence Corps, Instructor LHQ School of Military Intelligence; Rudolf Moser as a non-commissioned officer, Australian Military Forces, seconded during the war for intelligence duties. There is also reference to Don Notkin as part of the coordination group in 1961.

It seems that funding on a monthly basis was provided by the VJBD for almost 15 years. Individual members of the community also provided financial support. With the exception of secretarial work, all work looks to have been on a voluntary basis. Its major costs, as indicated by surviving financial records from the early 1960s, were for office rental, electricity and telephone, secretarial services, printing, purchase of newspapers and periodicals, search fees and photocopying. Out-of-pocket expenses amounted to less than one per cent of the early budget.

In its early years Research Services was well organised and highly professional, run on military lines. Its objective was to combat antisemitism through application of 'intelligence and security lessons learned in the armed services'.

Research Services operated under precisely defined Standing Orders. Every antisemitic incident brought to notice was investigated. The Standing Orders provided for the preparation of a written incident report for matters deemed urgent:

Except in an emergency all instructions will be in writing on an instruction sheet, which will be typed in duplicate. The I.S. [instruction sheet] will contain the relevant file number, the name of the person to whom it is addressed, the name of the person originating the instruction and details of the information required and such information (if any) as

the person originating it considers is necessary for the recipient to carry out the instructions satisfactorily ...

The original of the I.S. was placed in one of two 'Action Files', for the attention of the relevant duty officer.

In addition to dealing with reports of incidents, the organisation gathered information on the activities of antisemitic groups and kept watch on European migrant organisations. The major source of information was the publications of the organisations of interest. The surviving Research Services files include a full run of the League of Rights publication *On Target* and pamphlets and other documents produced by neo-Nazi groups. In addition, there were newspaper sources. In April 1961, 14 members of Research Services were involved in the reading of 18 newspapers in 12 languages other than English; in 1973 a volunteer was reading publications in Arabic.

Research Services was also involved in intelligence operations. It kept watch on meetings of antisemitic groups, for example driving past locations where meetings were being held and noting the numberplates of cars parked outside. It also, at times, undertook surveillance of individuals and groups. It had some (likely very few) informants close to or within organisations under observation. The Australia-wide membership list (comprising names and addresses) of one large neo-Nazi organisation found its way into the Research Services files.

Research Services maintained informal links with members of government agencies: with members of Special Branches of State police forces, Commonwealth security services and the Commonwealth Immigration Department. In 1964 Isi Leibler, in his capacity as chairman of the Public Relations Committee of the VJBD, noted that:

Close contact is maintained with the Police Department and other relevant state and federal agencies. Exchange of information and views as well as full co-operation has been maintained.

In a 1974 review of activities by Research Services, it was noted that over the years the organisation had 'patiently established contacts and connections on a person-to-person basis with personnel of state and federal instrumentalities in Australia and with organisations overseas'.

Research Services adopted a hostile position towards the Jewish Council to Combat Fascism and anti-Semitism. It was the view within the organisation that the Jewish Council, with its communist and left-wing links, could not be trusted and would be unable to establish a working relationship with members of the security forces. In its first year of existence, Research Services reported its view that the Jewish Council had deliberately exaggerated the significance of swastika daubings to whip up hysteria within the community with the objective of gaining financial support.

Correspondence was maintained with overseas organisations: in the United

States with the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish War Veterans, and Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith; in Britain with the British Board of Deputies Defence Committee, the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women, and the Wiener Library; in Israel with Yad Vashem; in Poland with the Jewish Historical Commission; and in West Germany with the War Crimes Commission. In 1976 it was reported that contact by telephone, cable, and letter had been maintained for at least 12 years with Simon Wiesenthal's Documentation Centre in Vienna. Such contacts enabled Research Services to contribute information on Nazi war criminals who had settled in Australia and for the organisation to be appraised of latest developments in global manifestations of antisemitism. A small amount of funding was provided to Wiesenthal to support his work. Some members of Research Services on overseas trips went out of their way to meet with Wiesenthal.

The development of a systematic information resource (what today would be called a database) was the central activity of Research Services. The organisation maintained both a card index system for quick reference and detailed files. Cards and files were cross-referenced and sorted in alphabetical order. By the mid-1960s the card index of persons contained more than 1000 names, the index of organisations and 'suspect publications' from Australia and overseas more than 300. The filing system provided for four categories: 'H' files – information on specific incidents, including assaults, threats contained in letters, antisemitic statements and details of swastika daubing; 'P' files – personal dossiers on individuals; 'O' files – dossiers on organisations, clubs and movements in Australia and overseas; and 'S' files – informants.

The location of incidents and organisations was mapped. Small pins located antisemitic incidents: red and pink pins were used for the location of swastika daubings, yellow for threats, blue for assaults and white for miscellaneous incidents not considered important. Long pins located antisemitic group meetings in private homes or businesses; green pins for meetings associated with immigrants from Hungary, yellow for Austria and Germany, red for Poles and Slovaks, blue for Ukrainians, orange for Italians and 'Latins', black for Anglo-Saxons and white for other. A third coding system employed colour-coded flags to locate prominent suspects, newspaper offices, the homes of editors, post office boxes and permanent club rooms: individuals and locations were classified by ethnicity and employed the same colours that were used to identify meeting locations.

Research Services developed a system for quantifying the occurrence of incidents over time. This process began in 1960, with data presented in summary tables in the organisation's annual reports. In the first three months of its existence 65 incidents were investigated, nearly half of which proved to be 'unconfirmed or dubious'.

MONTH	SUBSTANTIAL	LARRIKINISM	LEAFLETS	UNCONFIRMED	TOTALS
JAN. 1960	14	1	2	10	27
FEB.	12	1	1	14	28
MAR.	4		3	3	10
TOTAL	30	2	6	27	65

Reports of which full details could not be obtained were classified within this category, which also included one report which investigation proved to have been concocted.

By 1964 the categories were made more specific to include assaults, threats, daubings, letters and leaflets, and a miscellaneous category. The striking feature of the tabulations is the very small number of serious incidents in a city the size of Melbourne. Thus from November 1964 to October 1965 there were a total of two assaults and eight threats, similar to the 1963–64 level.

Much low level intelligence was collected and filed. To take two examples:

File H. XX. Subject – Fascist meeting reported at home in Caulfield: Remarks – Subject Hungarian railway worker named XX was later identified as a listed member of ‘Hungarian Mosgalom’ (the ‘Hungarian Movement’ and an Arrow-Cross anti-Semitic organisation identified in Melbourne). Information obtained from confidential source. (*Identification deleted.*)

Report: Alleged Nazi cell in Carlton. Further investigations to date show that this group contains a number of students, Jazz fans, existentialists, Bodgies etc. and other fringe elements. One member of the group possibly connects with anti-Semitic threatening letters ... and enquiries are being pursued ...

But the organisation also had the capacity to produce high quality assessments. Thus the confidential ‘Thumbnail sketch of anti-Semitic forces in Australia as at 1<sup>st</sup> June 1970’ was prepared by an unidentified member of Research Services ‘for the guidance of Jewish community leaders’. It was concise, witty, and prescient. In descending order of importance, it considered four categories:

Arabs: Small but growing numbers ... courted by new left radicals, with plenty of financial, political and fanatical potential. So far, struggling to penetrate intellectual and university forums ...

Australian League of Rights ... shrewdly led by an articulate

polemicist in Eric Butler ... not violent, but capable of penetrating the ultra-conservative Right ...

Hungarians, Croatians, Ukrainians, Poles, Latvians, etc.: A few old heroes of anti-Semitic ‘victories’ of World War Two seeking to recreate the glories of the good old days ... Fighting what is likely to be a losing battle in Australia’s unfavourable benign climate against the apathy of their fellow nationals, particularly youth. Nevertheless they need watching ...

Nationalist Socialists: A small, motley, serio-comic fringe group of political and social drop-outs, whose more photogenic camera-worthy, swastika carrying activities make them probably the least dangerous and best fund raising [assets] ... of the Jewish Community.

Research Services also had a defensive capacity. First in 1960, and at other times of concern, its members would conduct patrols, driving through the streets of Caulfield and other suburbs looking for suspicious activity and keeping homes, businesses and communal buildings under observation. The organisation developed a ready response capability with a list of telephone contacts of persons who could be quickly called into action. In 1964 it was reported to the VJBD that ‘the “Patrol” organisation established by VAJEX can be set in motion within a few hours should it be considered expedient or necessary’.

The threat was considered so serious that the whereabouts of members of the leadership group was kept on file during the Christmas-January holiday period, together with telephone numbers of holiday homes and interstate holiday locations.

In the period 1960–67 eight annual reports were prepared. Typically the reports were 20 pages in length and provided a general discussion of the level of antisemitic activity, a logging of incidents and discussion of specific groups, including immigrant organisations and Arab activists.

A number of special reports were prepared on activities within immigrant groups, the ‘New Australians’ in the terminology of the time – Polish, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Latvian, Croatian and Arab. Reports also dealt with Eric Butler and the League of Rights, and Australian Nazis.

One of the early reports focused on the Latvian community in Australia. This was forwarded from the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies to the ECAJ. In May 1963 the subject was the Australian National Socialist Party and Movement, revisited in 1971 when a list of known and suspected members and activists of the Australian Nazi Party was compiled, and in 1973 when a report on the Nazi Party’s Sixth Annual Congress was distributed.

In the early 1970s the focus of attention shifted from neo-Nazi to Arab groups and individuals, although an early report on ‘Arab Activities in Australia’ had covered the years 1961–64. In the context of the 1973 Yom Kippur War there were

concerns over possible assaults by shooting, the use of letter bombs and attacks by Palestinian guerrilla groups in Australia. A September 1973 report was titled 'Arab Affairs in Australia and Possible "Black September" Attacks'. A January 1974 letter to the President of the VJBD noted intelligence of a pending attack and observed that 'we regard the information seriously'. There was particular concern for the safety of prominent members of the community.

A surviving document from August 1961 indicated that some 50 copies of the annual report had been printed for distribution to the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Boards of Deputies and Jewish ex-service associations in all states, some members of Research Services, presidents of important Jewish organisations, leading members of the Jewish community such as members of parliament, local *rabbonim* and editors of the Jewish press. Reports were strictly confidential and not for publication. There was a requirement for written acknowledgement of receipts. Reports were to be kept in a secure location or returned.

Research Services provided direct briefings to the Public Relations Committee of the VJBD, although it took time to establish a working relationship. A third party report, whose authorship is not known, noted late in 1960:

Some liaison between the research group and the Public Relations Committee of the Board would seem desirable. Such liaison has not to date been achieved between R.S. and that Committee, each unfortunately tending to regard each from time to time as intruding on the other's preserves.

By 1963, however, reports were regularly presented to the Public Relations Committee, which incorporated material in its annual report to the VJBD. The Chairman of the Committee noted in 1964:

My Committee continued to function as liaison between the Research Services and the Board and its Executive. Further streamlining of procedures was affected and co-operation in all quarters is of the highest standard. The innovation of having a representative of Research Services giving reports of the activities of Research Services at least once per annum directly to the Board continued during the year under review. Mr. Alan Benjamin has delivered a very comprehensive report, which proved to be of great interest to the members of the Board. Appreciation of my Committee and of the Board is extended to the members of Research Services for the efficient and capable manner in which they carry out the difficult and exacting tasks.

The early concern over Research Services resurfaced in 1971. Arnold Bloch, then Chairman of the Research and Organisation Committee, reported his concern over the apparent lack of activity:

... Research Services is formally under the jurisdiction of my Committee. In the early period of 1971 certain activities prompted my committee and the Executive of the V.J.B.D. to require more frequent and more detailed activity from Research Services. Certain aspects of the relationship between The Board and Research Services gave cause for disquiet. A meeting was called with some members of Research Services and the situation was ameliorated. It is to be expected that the workload of Research Services will increase in the foreseeable future.

While some improvement in the relationship was noted in 1972, the VJBD funding of Research Services was terminated in 1974, during the presidency of Isi Leibler, to great resentment within Research Services. Alan Benjamin alleged in acrimonious correspondence that the motivation was Leibler's desire for full control, to establish what Benjamin termed the 'Leiblerforce'.

In reality, a range of issues led to the 1974 decision. While the importance of information-gathering was acknowledged, there was a sense of lack of sound judgement by the small leadership group, also concern over the amateurish nature of some activities. Research Services had failed to implement a succession strategy, which would enable it to move with the times – after almost 15 years it was still largely under the control of its founders. Further, its activities were becoming publicly known, with the potential to embarrass the Jewish community leadership in the context of the sometimes strained relationship with the Whitlam government, which had come to power in 1972.

In 1973 the *Melbourne Age* featured an exposé of the group by the journalist Ben Hills that highlighted its secret files and the involvement of ex-military officers. In 1975 the Palestine-Australia Solidarity Committee protested to the Federal Government about the activities of Research Services. Again the organisation was placed in the public eye, even though the protests were dismissed. Federal Attorney-General Lionel Murphy wrote on 14 September 1975:

I have had this matter looked into and I am informed that ... Research Services ... is considered to be a peaceful organisation concerned with the welfare and security of the Australian Jewish Community. There is no liaison between this organisation and Australian authorities.

The key reason, however, for the break with Research Services would seem to have been Leibler's desire to reposition the VJBD's anti-defamation work, entailing a lessening of emphasis on intelligence gathering (especially clandestine activities) and greater emphasis on (and far more resources devoted to) public relations. As part of the change instituted, Sam Lipski was appointed by the VJBD to a newly created community relations position. Leibler wrote to Stanley Klinger on 11 February 1974:

After discussion with members of my Executive I am writing to inform you that the Board has decided to end its financial contribution to Research Services dating from February 1st. The Board Executive agreed to this move because of the heavy financial burden placed upon it by the increase in its budget for the current year especially in the areas of public relations and anti-defamation activities. While we find it necessary to withdraw our financial subsidy we would like to make it clear that the Community Director, Mr. S. Lipski, remains available to be helpful and co-operative in whatever way may be mutually helpful.

The explanation of the broad context in which the change was made is provided in the major policy document prepared by Leibler, titled 'The Escalation of Anti-Israeli and Anti-Semitic Agitation in Australia', circulated in September 1974. The report highlights his sharp, insightful and visionary leadership.

Leibler wrote that 'my pessimistic fears that we were facing a major escalation in the quantitative and qualitative output of Arab propaganda and anti-Semitism in this country were unfortunately well founded'. He noted interrelated local developments and the 'worldwide deterioration of Israel's general position in the battle for public opinion'. Added to the traditional sources of opposition to the Jewish community and Israel, the various miniscule and insignificant Nazi groups, extremists in immigrant communities and the League of Rights, 'significant new anti Jewish forces have emerged. These include organisations enjoying mass support and access to virtually unlimited funds'.

Leibler identified two key factors in explaining the changing environment. First, the memory of the Holocaust 'which for nearly 20 years acted as a barrier against manifestations of open anti-Semitism from "respectable" quarters' no longer exercised an influence. Jews were 'openly defamed without engendering a sense of guilt or conjuring an association with Nazi genocide', especially amongst young people at universities. He identified changes in the left wing of the Labor Party and the left of the trade union movement, and the decision of the New Left to prioritise support for the Palestinian Liberation Organisation as 'probably the most alarming and ominous development in an already grim situation ...'

Second, the previously largely passive Arab communities in Australia, activated by overseas emissaries and supported with massive funds, had provided 'a new "mass base" not only for anti-Israeli propaganda, but for agitation against "Zionists" and the Jewish Community itself'. He concluded:

The entry into the political arena of large numbers of Arabs, Leftists and others, has for the first time confronted us with genuinely mass based organisations actively hostile to our Community. In contrast

to the radical right extremists who numbered tens or at the most hundreds we are now confronted with hostile mass movements, which have potential support numbering tens of thousands. We are also facing forces well equipped, ideologically committed, and veterans of political warfare from the Vietnam days. In propaganda, literature and manpower they heavily outnumber the handful of the Jewish Community, sufficiently knowledgeable and willing to confront them on a grass roots level ... The sheer weight of overseas financial support these groups command has created a totally new dimension, which in pure monetary terms we will not be able to match ...

The outcome of this political battle which faces Jewish Communities throughout the world, involves not only Israel, but also the security and viability of maintaining a meaningful life for *Galut Jews*.

With this reorientation and focus on community relations, the intelligence gathering of Research Services became a totally marginalised activity, continuing to operate with limited financial and personal support from VAJEX. Amongst the last of its surviving documents is a May 1976 newsletter, expressing its bitterness at the attempt to ‘stifle its work’ by the leadership of the Board of Deputies, and its commitment to ‘unremitting vigilance, preparedness and understanding’ as the necessary foundation for the maintenance of Jewish freedom, ‘in Australia no less than in Israel’.

### **Author’s note**

This paper is based on the records of the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies (held by AJHS Vic Inc, within the State Library of Victoria) and the archives of Research Services (Jewish Care Victoria). The assistance of Dr Howard Freeman and Lionel Sharpe (both of AJHS Vic Inc.) in locating documentary sources is gratefully acknowledged. Personal communications were provided by Isi Leibler and Sam Lipski. Professor Peter Medding kindly provided a copy of the unpublished tables of the 1967 survey. The following secondary sources provided the context for this article: Peter Medding, *From Assimilation to Group Survival* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1968); Idem., ‘The Melbourne Jewish Community Since 1945: A Political and Sociological Study’, unpublished MA thesis, University of Melbourne, 1962; Hilary Rubinstein, *Chosen: The Jews in Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987); Idem., *The Jews in Victoria* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986) W. D. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia. A Thematic History, Volume Two, 1945 to the present* (Port Melbourne: Heinemann, 1991); Suzanne Rutland, *Edge of the Diaspora* (Sydney: Collins, 1988); Idem., *The Jews in Australia* (New York: Cambridge 2005).

## Notes

- 1 W. D. Rubinstein, *The Jews in Australia. A Thematic History, Volume Two, 1945 to the Present* (Port Melbourne: Heinemann, 1991), p. 409.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 415.
- 3 Peter Medding, *From Assimilation to Group Survival* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1968), pp. 70–1.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
- 5 Hilary Rubinstein, *The Jews in Victoria* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986), p. 207.
- 6 Peter Medding, 'The Melbourne Jewish Community Since 1945: A Political and Sociological Study', unpublished MA thesis, University of Melbourne, 1962, pp. 492, 505.
- 7 1967 Jewish community survey, frequency tables (copy provided by Professor Peter Medding).
- 8 John Goldlust, *The Jews of Melbourne: A Community Profile* (Melbourne: Jewish Welfare Society, 1993).