

ISIDOR LISSNER, M.L.A.

by

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On 5 October 1883 the miners of Queensland's most productive goldfield elected a conservative Jewish merchant to represent them in the Colonial Legislature. Given that this field was soon to become the centre of northern unionism earning for itself a reputation for radical, xenophobic politics, the choice was remarkable. This, together with Lissner's long involvement in two of the 19th century North Queensland's major concerns, the mining industry and the separate State movement, amply justify an examination of his little known political career.

Isidor Siegfried Lissner was born at Posen in Prussia during 1832, the son of Siegfried Lissner and Julia Gluckmann. After his education at the Wilhelm Gymnasium was complete he left his home town at the age of twenty-four for the Victorian goldrushes. Arriving in Bendigo in 1856 he spent six years on this field before following the gold trekkers to New Zealand where he worked the Central Otago, West Coast and Thames fields. When the precious metal was discovered in North Queensland Lissner moved to the region's first permanent field, Ravenswood, during 1868. Three years later the diggings were disturbed by rumours of a "second Bendigo" some miles to the west, and Lissner left for the new discoveries at Charters Towers.¹

By this time, however, his main interest had shifted from prospecting to trading. He had opened the first of a succession of businesses at Arrow on the Central Otago field,² and when he arrived at Charters Towers was an experienced merchant. By October 1872 he had established a store on an excellent site in Mosman Street³ and was importing and retailing a variety of mining requisites ranging from food to miners' tools.⁴ The business was further enhanced when he obtained a wholesale wine and spirit licence and began to supply the many thriving hotels of Charters Towers. Nevertheless, Lissner could not resist dabbling in prospecting and mining, taking up shares in syndicates and involving himself in the formation of the early joint stock companies.⁵ He also took a lively interest in the activities of individual miners: ". . . anyone who was working a show had no difficulty in getting six months credit at Lissner's."⁶ Although these activities gained him the lasting affection of the miners, they led, in 1877, to his bankruptcy, and only an accommodation with his creditors allowed him to remain in business.⁷ Early in April 1883 Lissner sold his premises to the rapidly expanding company of Burns, Philp, in the process becoming a minor stockholder in that firm. He continued to manage his shop on the company's behalf until he entered colonial politics.

As a respected member of the town's business community, by the mid 1870s Lissner was playing an important role in civic affairs. In 1883 he was president of the district hospital and the School of Arts committees and a member of the fire brigade board.⁸ He had also presided over the Charters Towers Goldfield Committee, a political lobby group which was active in

the town under a variety of names during the 1870's. Charters Towers became a municipality during 1877 and Lissner was elected to the council in 1882, continuing to serve as an alderman until he became a member of the Legislative Assembly late the following year.

Although the party political system which operates in 20th century Australia had not yet developed, the Queensland election of 1883 was



Isidor Lissner (Oxley Library).

fought on fairly clear factional lines. A conservative group led by Thomas McIlwraith had governed during the preceding five years, but fell on a proposal to authorise the construction of what was commonly called the Transcontinental Railway. Intended to link Charleville to Point Parker on the Gulf of Carpentaria, the railway was to be constructed by private enterprise under a land-grant scheme based on the American model.

balled by *Northern Miner*. Lissner, on the other hand, received coverage equal to that of the Griffithites. Indeed, his platform, on issues considered important in Charters Towers, was identical to that of the liberals; on all other points he remained either non-committal or silent. He advertised:

To the Electors of Kennedy.

Gentlemen — In reply to the numerous signed requisition with which you have been pleased to honour me, I feel it my duty to become a Candidate for your suffrages at the ensuing General Election.

At present I do not purpose entering fully into my political views, but will take the earliest opportunity of addressing you at the various places throughout the Electorate.

I have decided to solicit your suffrages as an INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE, having an aversion to being "bossed" by anyone, and being no believer in the infallibility of either Mr. Griffith or Mr. McIlwraith.

I shall, if elected, vote for any measure which I consider conducive to the best interest of the Colony generally and to the North and our Mining Districts particularly. I pledge myself, if elected, to vote straight against the Transcontinental Railway, or any other similar scheme which may be brought before Parliament.

With reference to the Labor question I am decidedly opposed to the introduction of either *Coolie* or *Chinese* labor, and will make it my special business to watch jealously any measure that may be brought before the House tending to endanger the legitimate white labor of the Colony, either of the Coast or Inland. I would, further, vote for increasing the Poll Tax on Chinese to £25, and return no money for going back to Hong Kong.

I would vote that the duration of Parliaments should not exceed three years and also that Members should be paid expenses during the time they attend to their Parliamentary duties.

The Land Laws have engrossed the attention of the greatest statesmen of the day, and I must decline to argue for or against their opinions at present, but will vote for any clear and practical measure doing away with monopoly, and be favourable to the settlement of the poorer classes on the lands of the colony. In conclusion, Gentlemen, I may say that, although at present a member of Burns, Philp and Co, about which so much capital has been made by **unprincipled competitors**, I can assure you that I am what I say — a thoroughly Independent Candidate, and not an **Office-seeker**. I need not, therefore, trouble you with any humbug about my individual merits. I know your requirements from experience, and will, if elected, do my best for you.

Entrusting my Candidature to your unbiased consideration,
I am, Gentlemen,
Yours truly,
Isidor Lissner.¹⁶

Despite the handicap of the Burns, Philp connection¹⁷ — their ships were at this time engaged in the labour trade — and his ambiguous statement about “legitimate” white labour, which were quickly seized upon by his opponents, Lissner’s campaign was conducted with a dignity and humour rare in nineteenth century goldfields’ politics. Indeed, his personal qualities constituted his main political advantage, allowing him to brush aside even an attack by the Towers’ formidable temperance movement.¹⁸ Nevertheless, it is unlikely that he could have won the seat had not the liberal vote been split, for the three Griffithite candidates between them polled nearly 67% of the total vote. In Charters Towers itself the liberal movement was so strong that even with the handicap of the third candidate Rutledge and Stubbley topped the poll. However, Lissner’s support was strong in Ravenswood and Ravenswood Junction and when the poll was declared on 8 October the senior and junior members for the Kennedy were respectively Arthur Rutledge and Isidor Lissner.¹⁹ The election of 1883 resulted in a landslide victory for the liberals; Griffith became Premier for the first time when Parliament opened in November. As an Independent Lissner sat on the cross-benches, but his political loyalties were revealed on the opening day of the first session when he voted with McIlwraith on the election of a Speaker, and in subsequent divisions he voted consistently with the Opposition. He was, however, scrupulous never to violate his election promises and opposed the introduction of coloured labour with vigour and even eloquence.²⁰ Although his partisanship normally placed him on the minority side of the House, his gentle personal style was as effective as it had been in Charters Towers. Bernays later remembered him as “the humorous little Isidor Lissner who told the House in confidence, when making his maiden speech, that he was a very poor speaker but a very good ‘list’ner”.²¹

During his first five year term, one of Lissner’s main pre-occupations was the separation debate. The idea that North Queensland might one day be politically separated from the Brisbane-oriented south dated back to the 1860s, but underwent a vigorous revival during the 1880s. Although sometimes seen as a conservative movement connected with the desire of the sugar industry to retain its coloured plantation labour, separation was never in fact supported by any party leader. Rather, it manifested itself in terms of dissatisfaction with the government of the day, and drew its support from a variety of northern interest groups. It gained considerable impetus in coastal districts from the slump which began in the sugar industry late in 1883,²² but aroused only minor interest in mining districts at that time. When the debate became general in Charters Towers during 1885, support for separation derived largely from those who were dissatisfied with the Griffith Government, and therefore, for a short time, followed party lines. Maurice Hume Black visited the town during April, and a Separation League was formed with prominent conservatives John Deane and H. R. Rutherford²³ as office bearers. Simultaneously, an Anti-Separation League was set up by the liberals L. W. Marsland and E. D. Miles.²⁴

Later in the year, however, these party lines began to blur as a general feeling of dissatisfaction with the government spread through the district.

Two major local issues in Charters Towers were the government's failure to provide a Burdekin irrigation scheme,²⁵ and the imposition of a 5% tax on all imported machinery.²⁶ Lissner complained bitterly in the House that the tax disadvantaged northern miners to protect southern machinery manufacturers, while in Charters Towers a public meeting convened by one of his strongest political opponents, L. W. Marsland, carried a motion condemning the tax.²⁷ This discontent fostered the separationist cause, which was taken up by O'Kane and his *Northern Miner* in November.²⁸ Early in 1886 Lissner publicly declared his support for the movement.²⁹

The only representative of a northern electorate who consistently opposed separation was the Attorney-General Arthur Rutledge whom Lissner described as being the member for a northern seat rather than a northern member.³⁰ Rutledge was responsible for the petition which circulated in North Queensland concurrently with the 1886 separation petition.³¹ In the meantime Lissner and the other northern members were constantly raising the subject in parliamentary debates; this culminated in a motion put by John Macrossan, member for Townsville, that the House petition the Queen "to cause the Northern portion of the Colony to be erected into a separate and independent Colony with representative institutions."³² Macrossan's eloquent and impassioned speech to the motion was complemented by Lissner's characteristically down-to-earth contribution. Among other things he said:

The fact is that the majority of the people wish to part from their friends and brothers in the South because this extensive business is too large, and some of the customers in the far North are getting very much neglected, and it is better to give them the chance of doing their own business, and going on their own hook; if they are allowed to do that they will be better satisfied. Some people here, especially the Government, seem to think that if we get separation we shall go to ruin. Well let us go to ruin; it will not affect the South very much. The Minister for Works says we shall have to pay our share of money down; possibly he means in a cheque, or at least with an endorsed bill for the amount. I do not believe Her Majesty does that sort of business; I do not think that would be good enough for Her Majesty. But we have securities sufficient to square the financial position of the colony.³³

The motion was, however, defeated by 40 votes to 9.

The separation petition eventually collected more than 10,000 signatures.³⁴ The document, over 600 feet in length, was placed in a box made from northern silky-oak and cedar, with a plate of Ravenswood silver, and dispatched to the Colonial Secretary in England, where it arrived early in 1887.³⁵ Despite the League's optimism it was decided that Griffith's presence in London at that time needed countering. To this end the committee selected two delegates, Mackay's Maurice Hume Black to represent the sugar interests and Isidor Lissner to speak for the miners. The two travelled to England, and, on 17 May, waited on Sir Henry Holland, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Bernays recorded their "laying the case for the petitioners before him with great particularity and leaving no stone unturned to impress him with the urgency of their claim and the

justice of their cause."³⁶ Their petition was rejected three days later; the separatist cause had been dealt a blow from which it never completely recovered.

General elections were due early in 1888. During the previous year, the Assembly passed an Electoral Districts Act which redistributed the seats to raise the number of representatives to seventy-two. The Act created the electoral district of Charters Towers, with two seats, leaving but one for the greatly diminished electorate of Kennedy. Lissner, again standing as an Independent, easily won the Kennedy from his sole opponent George Simpson of Townsville, while the Charters Towers liberals and liberal-laborites busied themselves splitting their votes between no fewer than five candidates.³⁷

The paradox of the tenth parliament, which ran from 1888 to 1893, was that it witnessed both the ultimate manifestation of the 19th century political system and the rise of the party politics which were to prevail during the following century. McIlwraith returned to the Premiership on 13 June but, after his victory in a major constitutional confrontation with the Governor, Sir Anthony Musgrave, ill-health forced his resignation on 30 November. He retained a seat in the cabinet formed by Boyd D. Morehead, but again resigned on 16 September over a disputed item on the loans estimates. In June 1890 the Government fell on a proposal to introduce a property tax, and Griffith came to an accommodation with his long-term rival McIlwraith which allowed him to form a government and assume the Premiership. This so-called "Griffilwraith" lasted until 1893, a political oddity which epitomised the fluidity of the political divisions of that time, when neither philosophical nor practical differences between the factions were as clear cut as many of their supporters believed.

It is in the light of the "Griffilwraith" and its political implications that Lissner, essentially a 19th century politician, must be judged. Despite his apparent acceptance of patronage from Robert Philp³⁸ and his consistent support of McIlwraith in routine divisions, his claim to be an Independent cannot be dismissed out of hand. He was above all a North Queensland representative, and as such was a conscientious and active Member of the House. He invariably contributed to debates on matters affecting the mining industry, northern railways and water supplies, decentralisation and separation, and the sugar industry. When factional loyalties conflicted with his perception of his duty to his electorate, the latter dominated. Further, for the ten years during which he represented the Kennedy he remained true to his election promises of 1883, supporting Griffith on measures such as the introduction of triennial parliaments and the payment of members.³⁹ As a speaker he was never inspiring, but he retained the humorous, matter-of-fact style which had first invoked the confidence of the northern miners. His career was apparently crowned with success when, after the appointment as Chief Justice of Samuel Griffith, and the consequent accession of McIlwraith to the Premiership, he was appointed Minister for Mines and Public Works on 27 March 1893. That he was unable to leave his mark on mining legislation was a function of the changing political style of the northern miners, which lost him his seat in the May elections.

The rapid development of trade unionism among the Charters Towers miners after 1886 gave substance to the district's long-term tendency towards radical politics. A branch of the Australian Labor Federation was set up in the town in June 1890, and despite the setbacks of the disastrous Queensland strikes of 1890 and 1891, Labor candidates were sponsored for both Charters Towers and the Kennedy in 1893.⁴⁰ As a recession enveloped the colony, Lissner appears to have underestimated the strength and cohesiveness of the labour movement. The *Northern Miner* reported his attitude towards the Labor candidates immediately after his arrival in the electorate:

Mr. Lissner considers that the majority of people who do not imagine human society is to be entirely reconstructed by a few Acts of Parliament will agree with him, that in the present condition of the colony it is absurd to indulge in vague theories and fads, either in the direction of a State Bank or a National Wash-house. The colony is face to face with a grave emergency, and can no more afford to grant to interested and disinterested enthusiasts the privilege of experimenting with the people, than an individual unable to pay his debts can afford to take a trip to Europe.⁴¹

Perhaps the member for Kennedy had been too long in Brisbane; certainly a politician more attuned to the local mood would not have dismissed so lightly the reformist ideas which were sweeping the North.

Lissner's error of judgement was compounded by his under-estimation of the impact that his appointment to the ministry had on an electorate which still considered itself represented by an independent candidate. His policy statement suggests that he believed that his constituents would trade independence for the benefits the appointment might confer on the local mining industry.

I have, for ten years, represented the Kennedy as an Independent Member, but from experience I came to the conclusion that, under the present depressing circumstances of Queensland and other Australian Colonies, Sir Thomas McIlwraith was the fittest and most trustworthy Leader of the Day, and, therefore, joined his Government when the portfolio for Mines was offered to me.

This step has been grossly misrepresented by some jealous or misinformed persons up North . . . Amongst the industries of great importance, I trust to see mining to the fore, and will use all possible practical means to assist its development all over our vast areas of promising mineral country.

I believe, as I always did, that Queensland, north of Cape Palmerston, should have a government of its own, and will support any constitutional means towards accomplishing this end. I do not think anything else but fair and square Territorial Separation will be a satisfactory solution to the question, and do not intend to support any other measure in lieu of it, whether a member of the Government or not.

The question of improving the condition of Labor has my hearty support, but not exactly on the lines laid down by windy agitators and demagogues, but by fair and cordial co-operation with capital

and enterprise. To put it short, this is not the time for theories and fads, and if elected I mean to assist in passing such measures which I believe will be a benefit to our adopted country and will help to get it out of its present stagnation.⁴²

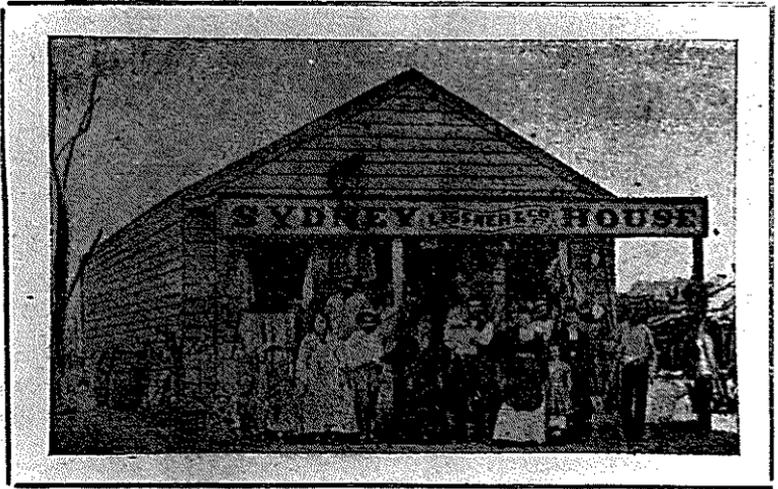
It was a bad time to be campaigning on behalf of 'capital and enterprise'. On 22 April, four days after the publication of this statement, the Australian Joint Stock Bank closed its doors, followed on 15 May by the Bank of North Queensland and the Queensland National Bank, of which McIlwraith was a director. Although Lissner ran a vigorous campaign he lost his seat to the Labor candidate, polling particularly badly in the town of Ravenswood. George Jackson, an old Ravenswood resident and mill owner became the member for Kennedy, while the third contestant, the liberal William McCulla, lost his deposit.⁴³ Lissner, who for some years had not maintained a house in the north, returned to Brisbane where he devoted himself to his business as a stock and sharebroker and to his growing family of two sons and two daughters by his wife Louise Margaret Ross.⁴⁴

Robert Philp, Lissner's former business colleague and political sponsor, succeeded him as Minister for Mines. Philp's star was rising, and in his ultimate bid for the Premiership he looked to his longstanding friends. When McIlwraith left Queensland in the wake of the inquiry into the failure of the Queensland National Bank, and Philp's rival, T. J. Byrnes, moved from Cairns to his North Brisbane seat, Lissner was prevailed upon to contest Cairns. Philp had telegraphed the Cairns Political Association proposing Lissner as its candidate. Although initially favouring a local solicitor, Ernest A. Milford, the Association became alarmed when the influential Charters Towers Labor organisation announced that it was sponsoring a candidate, Thomas Givens, for the seat. Therefore it turned to the more experienced contender, Lissner, whose candidature was announced on 28 February 1896.⁴⁵

At the end of February, Lissner, by then 64 years of age, travelled to Cairns to begin his campaign. He was, however, essentially a mining man and a miners' politician; his policy statement demonstrated his failure to come to grips with his new electorate. He wrote;

I have been a member of the Queensland Legislature for ten years, and am personally known in the North as one amongst the men we meet who know your requirements, and would keep my eye on the main chance of getting them, if elected. I am in accord with most of the measures passed by the Government of the day during the last Parliament, especially those leading up to assist and further the industries of our colony. Referring to sugar, pastoral, farming, dairy and mining industries, I approve of the Government's policy. With regard to railway matters I approve of most of the late extensions but would like to see the Cairns line also extended. The fact that too much money has been spent on short distances is not sufficient reason for a policy to leave it for ever where it is now. I am in favour of practical, progressive and democratic measures generally, to protect the people who live by their enterprise, industrial, commercial or otherwise.⁴⁶

SYDNEY HOUSE; 1874.



Lissner's Store, Charters Towers.

Only in one area was Lissner really in accord with his committee. Like so many of the older politicians, his approach to government was entirely pragmatic, and he genuinely believed that only those 'with a stake in the country' could be trusted to protect its interests. He was therefore alarmed by the rise of the labour movement with its conflicting and fundamentally different ideas about the purpose of government, and the strongest part of his campaign consisted of his plea to keep out the Labor candidate. His statement continued:

I am a believer in unionism to protect labor against aggressive monopolists, but am opposed to the preachers of 'socialism in our time', who want to swamp our Parliament as nominees of the A.L.F. for their own purposes.⁴⁷

On 14 March he told a public meeting that "... there were only two parties in the House, one Government, and another which growls about it under the flag of socialism and anarchism."⁴⁸ "Vote for Lissner Down With Socialism"⁴⁹ won the poll by 469 votes to Givens' 426.⁵⁰ Much of the credit was due to Mr. Patience, a Burns, Philp employee who had steered the nomination through the Political Association before organizing a massive 140 man committee to assist with the campaign. A week after the election Patience and Lissner left Cairns, the former to take up his promotion as manager of the Townsville branch of Burns, Philp Company,⁵¹ the latter to occupy his seat in the Legislature. Lissner never returned to Cairns.

In Brisbane Lissner became deeply immersed in mining ventures. He had always retained his early interest in the Charters Towers gold mines, although his investments to this time had been moderate. For example, in 1891 his Charters Towers holdings had comprised 300 shares in Day Dawn No. 6 West, 100 Mills Day Dawn Uniteds and 300 shares in the Union Gold Mine.⁵² During his final term in office, however, his investment activities increased considerably. He was appointed Chairman of Directors of the Menzies Gold Mine in West Australia in 1897⁵³ and during the same year extended his interests to the base metal industry by becoming deeply involved in the Chillagoe Company.

When the Chillagoe leases were floated in Melbourne during 1897 by C. W. Chapman and James Smith Reid, it was Reid's friend Lissner who was asked, in his capacity of sharebroker, to handle the sale of the shares. This legitimate business activity became tinged with impropriety when Lissner was also asked to help manoeuvre the Chillagoe Railway Bill through the Legislative Assembly. The promoters believed that the development of the silver-lead and copper leases depended on the provision of a rail link between Chillagoe and Mareeba, and the Company offered to build the railway in exchange for being allowed certain concessions. The Bill, which was passed in December, provided for a fifty year mineral lease over 2,000 acres of land, exempt from normal labour conditions; a further 1,156 acres to be held for twenty-five years; a twenty-one year lease over the Cairns railway wharf and the right to erect ore-reduction works above the Barron Falls and to generate hydro-electricity from the river.⁵⁴ Lissner's hard work and influence in the House had been important to the passage of the Bill. The railway was built, but the scheme gave rise to a scandal in 1900 when the publication of an extremely optimistic geological report skyrocketed the price of shares, allowing the company directors to dispose of substantial parcels.⁵⁵

By that time, however, Lissner's political career had ended. In January 1899, when preparations for the triennial elections began, Lissner confirmed his intention to recontest the seat in a telegram to the editor of the Cairns *Morning Post*.⁵⁶ But the local conservative group, by that year renamed the Cairns Ministerial Party, met two weeks later and decided to reject his candidature. The wire they forwarded to Brisbane stated ". . . that although Cairns was grateful for what he had done for the constituency it was felt that his absence from the electorate since his return to Parliament would prove fatal to his chance of success."⁵⁷ Lissner was realistic and decided to bow out: Labor would provide a formidable challenge in this election, and without the support of the Ministerial Party organisation, any bid as an Independent would be sheer folly.

Although by no means undistinguished, Lissner's career failed to fulfil the promise of the 1880s. He had been deeply involved in the mining industry since 1856, and it is likely he would have been a Mines Minister of distinction. That the opportunity was lost was in part due to the economic depression which struck the colonies at a vital stage of his career fostering, though by no means generating, the rise of Labor politics in the mining electorates. In part, however, it was Lissner's own underestimation of the

important changes which were occurring in the electorate which cost him the Kennedy in 1893. Despite Lissner being the sitting member, George Jackson had been a stronger opponent than Simpson, and had the backing of the labour movement. Lissner died in the early morning of 22 July 1902 at the age of 70. In Brisbane the Stock Exchange closed for his funeral, which was attended by the Premier and many of his erstwhile Parliamentary colleagues. He was also generally mourned in the north, where he inspired lasting affection. As the *Northern Mining Register* noted, "His bonhomie and kindness of heart were universally appreciated, and even though he had completed the three score and ten, it is felt he has gone too soon."⁵⁸

Editorial Note

The author offered her biographical essay on Isidor Lissner for publication in this Journal, believing that it may be of special interest to its readers. That her contribution is the result of detailed and original research is clear enough. The writer, however, did not herself discover any material throwing any light on the subject's background and personal life, concentrating on his activities and influence as a political figure. There is little, if any, doubt as to Lissner's Jewish antecedents although it is not known whether Lissner at any time identified himself with the Jewish community in Queensland or elsewhere. There is so far no evidence that he did so, and it has since been indicated by the writer that Lissner was buried at Toowong, Queensland where a Church of England service was conducted on 23 July 1902. His wife, in 1888, had predeceased him at an early age; see, *Brisbane Courier*, 24 July 1902. Mrs. Menghetti mentions that Lissner was nicknamed "Moses" by a satirical writer for the *Northern Miner* (probably Thadeus O'Kane); see, *Northern Miner*, 4 November 1882. She adds, in passing, that Lissner's shop assistant, George Benjamin, was buried with a Jewish funeral service late in 1875.

The influx of migrants during the goldrush era of course included overseas Jews, some of whom, like Lissner, were natives of Posen. As Mrs. Menghetti's biography shows, Lissner was later to make his mark on the Queensland political scene of his day. Any serious research of this kind is certainly welcome as there is a dearth of knowledge relating to Queensland's early Jews. The author's contribution adds to our rather limited store of information concerning the life and work of Jewish pioneers beyond the more populous regions of Australian settlement. Lissner was by no means an isolated case of one who succumbed to the environmental pressures by assimilation out of the Jewish fold. Note, for example, Solomon Meyer, said to have been the first Jewish trader when gold was discovered in 1851 at Ophir. He also was to become a parliamentarian though not as prominent as Lissner in Queensland. Meyer, who was undoubtedly a Jew, married out of the faith and finally received the last rites from the Church of England. Yet another instance is that of Robert Henry Levien, son of Alfred Levien of Maitland and nephew

of P. J. Cohen who was the recognised founder of organised Jewish religious life at Sydney. R. H. Levien, a parliamentarian of many years standing in Northern New South Wales, was in fact baptised at birth into the Church of England. Consider, too, Barnett Levey — the founder of Australian theatre — and Isaac Nathan, the celebrated early musician. Both of the latter, during their lives, were regarded as Hebrews, even if their hold on their original faith was tenuous. On the other hand, Jewish origins have sometimes been ascribed, usually by non Jews, to other well known figures such as Bernhardt Otto Holtermann without justification, leading a writer such as Mr. Philip Geeves to say: "he was buried in the historic St. Thomas' Anglican Cemetery, North Sydney, thus deflating those critics who maintained he was a Jew." That observation as regards Holtermann may be quite correct, but particularly in those earlier times, baptism, marriage and burial by the Church are not necessarily indicative that the individual concerned was not of Jewish origin.

Following this publication, one is hopeful that the writer, and perhaps others as well, will supplement the present article by more information and detail relating to Lissner's origins, to his personal life, including his activities on the Victorian and New Zealand goldfields. It would be surprising, indeed, if there is not more to be known of Isidor Lissner as a Jew, albeit, not a religious one.

NOTES

1. Information about Lissner's early life is derived from D. B. Waterson, *A Biographical Register of the Queensland Parliament 1860-1929* (Canberra 1972), p.108; *The Charters Towers Mining Standard*, 22 July 1902; *The Northern Mining Register*, 28 July 1902; M. J. Fox, *A History of Queensland: Its People and Industries*, Vol. 3 (Brisbane 1921).
2. *Charters Towers Mining Standard*, 22 July 1902; see, L. M. Goldman, *The History of the Jews in New Zealand*, pp.90, 130.
3. B. Palmer to J. Jardine, 22 October 1872. COL/A 4506, Queensland State Archives.
4. His decision to import the newly invented lithofracture for blasting in the mines led to a tragedy late in 1875 when his two shop assistants, George Benjamin and Ebenezer Russel were killed in an explosion of detonator caps on the premises. *The Queenslander*, 1 January 1876.
5. He was a subscriber to the second company formed on the field, the Columbia Gold Mining Company No Liability, in 1876. *Register of Companies, Charters Tower, MWO 11A/T1*, Queensland State Archives.
6. *The Northern Mining Register*, 28 July 1902.
7. *The Northern Miner*, 29 August 1877.
8. *The Post Office Directory, Queensland, 1883-4*.
9. *The Northern Miner*, 27 August 1883.

10. The Northern Separation League had been launched in Townsville in July 1882. Christine Ray Doran, *North Queensland Separation in the Nineteenth Century*. Ph.D. Thesis, James Cook University of North Queensland, 1981, pp.142-144.
11. *The Northern Miner*, 13 January 1883.
12. During his term Stubbley had taken up residence in Melbourne and so was rarely in the House.
13. *The Northern Miner*, 25 August 1883.
14. Secretary of the joint committee and organiser of Rutledge and Stubbley's campaign was E. D. Miles, a prominent Charters Towers Griffithite.
15. The feud stemmed from a theft of gold from a mill managed by Buckland in 1880. *The Northern Miner* implicated Buckland himself in the theft and Buckland successfully sued O'Kane for the libel.
16. *The Northern Miner*, 24 August 1883.
17. *The Hopeful* whose master was tried for murder in 1884 was a Burns, Philp ship.
18. *The Northern Miner*, 19 September 1883.
19. *Ibid.*, 8 October 1883.
20. Queensland Legislative Assembly, *Votes and Proceedings*, 1883-4.
21. Charles Arrowsmith Bernays, *Queensland Politics During Sixty (1859-1919) Years* (Brisbane n.d.), p.101.
22. Doran, *supra*, pp.147-156.
23. Rutherford had presided over Lissner's election campaign committee during 1883.
24. Miles had been secretary of Rutledge's campaign committee during 1883. For these meetings see Doran, *supra*, pp.159-161.
25. *Ibid.*, p.173.
26. *Ibid.*, p.172.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*, p.174.
29. *Ibid.*, p.175.
30. Queensland Legislative Assembly, *Debates*, 1886-7.
31. Doran, *supra*, p.162.
32. Bernays, *supra*, p.516.
33. Queensland Legislative Assembly, *Debates*, 1886-7, p.560.
34. However the legitimacy of some of the signatures was questioned.
35. Doran, *supra*, pp.262-3.
36. Bernays, *supra*, p.517.
37. Lissner won 240 votes to Simpson's 163. *Northern Miner*, 15 May 1888.
38. G. C. Bolton, "Robert Philp: Capitalist as Politician", in D. J. Murphy and R. B. Joyce (eds.), *Queensland Political Portraits 1859-1952* (Brisbane 1978), p.199.
39. Queensland Legislative Assembly, *Debates*, 1888-1892.
40. Diane Menghetti, "The Gold Mines of Charters Towers", in

- K. H. Kennedy (ed.), *Readings in North Queensland Mining History* (Townsville 1982) Vol.2.
41. *The Northern Miner*, 17 April 1893.
 42. *Ibid.*, 18 April 1893.
 43. Although Contingent (Optional Preferential) voting had been introduced by the Electoral Act of 1892 this did not affect the outcome in the Kennedy which was decided on the primary vote. *Northern Miner*, 22 April 1893.
 44. Waterson, *supra*, p.108.
 45. *Cairns Argus*, 26 February 1896 and 29 February 1896.
 46. *Ibid.*, 29 February 1896.
 47. *Ibid.*
 48. *Ibid.*, 14 March 1896.
 49. *Ibid.*, 3 April 1896.
 50. *Ibid.*, 8 April 1896.
 51. *Ibid.*, 11 April 1896.
 52. Summary of Capital and Shares, Charters Tower 1891. MWO 11A/01, Queensland State Archives.
 53. Waterson, *supra*, p.108.
 54. G. C. Bolton, *A Thousand Miles Away: A History of North Queensland to 1920* (Canberra 1972), p.280. Administrative complications precluded any further action on this part of the scheme after 1899.
 55. *Ibid.*, p.281.
 56. *Morning Post*, 11 January 1899.
 57. *Ibid.*, 1 February 1899.
 58. *The Northern Mining Register*, 28 July 1902.