

## Heart of a Nation: Responses to Japanese Investment in Queensland in the Late 1980s

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The rise of ‘Japan-bashing’<sup>1</sup> in the 1980s is frequently characterised as a disappointing, discordant or disastrous shift in relations between the West and Japan. Despite its faults, ‘Japan-bashing’ dispelled the considerable air of ambivalence that had been held concerning Japan in the post-war period. For many in the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia and Australia, ambivalence towards Japan and the Japanese was replaced with apprehension on the one hand and some degree of anger on the other, as the successful trajectory of the Japanese economy during the ‘bubble’ era of the 1980s appeared to set Japan against the West in the competition for control of the future. Issues of unequal and allegedly unfair trade with Japan, for example, attracted and maintained the attention of scholars, business leaders, politicians and the media alike. Some commentators spoke of the renewed need to ‘contain’ Japan<sup>2</sup>, employing World War II and Cold War metaphors to represent Japan as a danger to the West. In this atmosphere, Japanese investment in the West became a contentious question in many parts of the world, as for many Westerners such investment seemed very similar to an economic invasion<sup>3</sup>. In Australia, for example,

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<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of ‘Japan-bashing’ see, for example, David Brock, ‘The theory and practice of Japan-bashing’, *The National Interest*, vol 17, Fall 1989, pp 29-40; James Fallows, Chalmers Johnson, Clyde Prestowitz Jr, and Karel van Wolferen, ‘Beyond Japan-bashing: the “gang of four” defends the revisionist line’, *US News & World Report*, 7 May 1990, pp 54-5; Masao Miyoshi, ‘Bashers and bashing in the world’, in Masao Miyoshi ed., *Off center: Power and culture relations between Japan and the United States*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1991; Bernard Sarachek, ‘Japan bashing and the American malaise’, *Business & The Contemporary World*, Summer 1992, pp 40-48; Frank Nuessel, ‘Linguistic correlates of Japan-bashing’, in Jesse Levitt, Leonard R N Ashley, and Kenneth H Rogers eds., *Language in contemporary society*, New York: Society of Geolinguistics, 1993, pp 332-41; and Hartwig Hummel, ‘“Japan bashing”: Die ethnisierung der handelsbeziehungen zu Japan im politischen diskurs der USA [“Japan bashing”: the ethnicising of the trade relations with Japan in the political discourse of the USA]’, *Forschungsberichte aus dem Institut für Sozialwissenschaften der TU Braunschweig*, no 16, January 1997

<sup>2</sup> James Fallows, ‘Containing Japan’, *The Atlantic*, vol 263, no 5, May 1989, pp 40-53

<sup>3</sup> Regarding Japanese investment in the United States see, for example, Mamoru Yoshida, *Japanese direct manufacturing investment in the United States*, New York: Praeger, 1987; Michael Meyer, Rich Thomas, Bradley Martin, and Sheryl Fragin, ‘The buying of America: Japanese money is flowing into the United States - and sparking controversy’, *Bulletin with Newsweek*, 31 May 1988, pp 84-8; John Hillkirk, ‘Japanese buying spree; they pocket high-profile properties’, *USA Today*, 1 November 1989, p B1; Derek A Wittner, ‘Japanese investment in U.S. real estate: the oriental express’, *Real Estate Law Journal*, vol 17, no 2, 1988, pp 99-117; Daniel Burstein, *Yen!: the threat of Japan's financial empire*, Morebank NSW: Bantam Schwartz, 1988; Glenn A Pitman and Sang T Choe, ‘Attitudinal variations toward Japanese investment in the United States’, *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, vol 54, no 3, Summer 1989, pp 15-8; Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins, *Selling out: How we are letting Japan buy our land, our industries, our financial institutions, and our future*, Chicago and New York: Contemporary Books, 1989; William H Lash III, ‘Unwelcome imports: Racism, sexism, and foreign investment’, *Michigan Journal of International Law*, vol 13, no 1, Fall 1991, pp 1-42; Simon Partner, *Saying yes to Japanese investment*, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1992; Robert L. Kearns,

Japanese investment evoked the age-old fears of invasion from the north by the 'yellow peril'<sup>4</sup> and the memories of Japan's militarism against Australia in World War II. In addition, the question of Japanese investment found its own niche in Australia's historically deep-seated uneasiness about Asia's geographical proximity. It helped to fuel the already controversial debate about the 'Asianisation' of Australia, the process of the nation's shift away from Europe towards 'Asia', which was argued to be having a considerable, and perhaps detrimental, impact on the national-cultural identity of the nation. Finally, Japanese investment became one more catalyst of the wider debate about globalisation, particularly how the integration of Australia into a universal 'global' can and does impact on the particularist diversity of the 'local'.

Concerns about the Japanese presence and involvement in Australia were widely articulated across Australia in the late 1980s and into the 1990s. From the rapid expansion of Japanese tourism in the 1980s, to the so-called 'Silver Columbia' plan to re-settle thousands of elderly Japanese in Australia in 1987, to the nation-wide debate over the multifunction polis in the early 1990s, the issue of Japan's connection to and involvement with Australia was debated with some fervour. Vehemence on both sides of the debate was especially evident concerning Japanese investment and more so when such investment touched on the near-mythic sector of land in Australia<sup>5</sup>. While the debate over what came to be termed the 'third wave'<sup>6</sup> of investment into Australia by Japan has been extensively

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*Zaibatsu America: How Japanese firms are colonising vital U.S. Industries*, New York: Macmillan International, 1992; and Arthur J. Alexander, 'Japanese direct investment in the United States: Revising and updating perceptions', Report No. 42A, Japan Economic Institute, 1997. For discussion of the issue of foreign investment generally in the United States, see Kenneth C Crowe, *America for sale*, New York: Doubleday, 1978; and Martin Tolchin and Susan Tolchin, *Buying into America: How foreign money is changing the face of our nation*, New York: Times Books, 1988

<sup>4</sup> For contemporary discussion of these issues see, for example, David Walker, *Anxious nation: Australia and the rise of Asia, 1850-1939*, St Lucia, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1999; Anthony Burke, *In fear of security: Australia's invasion anxiety*, Annandale, NSW: Pluto Press, 2001; and David Walker, 'Survivalist anxieties: Australian responses to Asia, 1890s to the present', *Australian Historical Studies*, no 120, October 2002, pp 319-30

<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to statistically account for this territorial possessiveness, as it was not until 1989 that polling on sectoral differences in attitudes to Japanese investment began in Australia: Murray Goot, 'How much? By whom? In what? Polled opinions on foreign investment, 1958-1990', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol 44, no 3, December 1990, pp 258-60. Nevertheless, as cultural historian John Barnes has suggested, the sense of territoriality is basic to the myth of Australia, that is the 'essence of the Australian legend is the struggle of man with the land ... [and] ... the right to possess the land': John Barnes, 'Legend', in Richard Nile ed., *Australian civilisation*, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1994, p 41

<sup>6</sup> A term used by Abe David and Ted Wheelwright, *The third wave: Australia and Asian capitalism*, Sutherland, NSW: Left Book Club Co-operative Ltd, 1989

documented, particularly concerning the multifunction polis<sup>7</sup>, one particularly heated exchange of views on Japanese investment during this era remains largely unconsidered. This is the spirited reaction to the perception of high levels of Japanese investment in land on Queensland's Gold Coast in 1988, a reaction which undoubtedly contributed to Queensland's reputation as a state where, as the Garnaut report on the rising importance of Asia for Australia observed in 1989, opponents of Japanese investment were quite 'ostentatious'<sup>8</sup>.

By mid-1988 members of the Gold Coast community had formed a populist association entitled 'Heart of a Nation' to campaign for the alteration of the federal constitution to prohibit land ownership by non-Australians<sup>9</sup>. A contemporary extension to

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Ross Mouer and Yoshio Sugimoto, eds. *The MFP debate: A background reader*, Bundoora, Vic: LaTrobe University Press, 1990; Joseph Wayne Smith, *Australia - going, going, gone? : A critique of the multifunction polis project*, Bedford Park, SA: Flinders University Press, 1990; Gavan McCormack, 'And shall the multifunction polis yet be built?' in Paul James ed., *Technocratic dreaming: Of very fast trains and Japanese designer cities*, Melbourne: Left Book Club Co-operative Ltd, 1990, pp 129-37; Ian Inkster, *The clever city : Japan, Australia and the multifunction polis*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1991; Katsuhiko Futamura, 'The multifunction polis - a vision for Japan-Australia co-operation: Behind the rush of four states to obtain the MFP site', in Ross Mouer ed., *Japanese images of Australia : A collection of Japanese writings on Australia 1990*, Clayton, Vic: Institute of Contemporary Asian Studies, Monash University, 1991, pp 17-20; Allan Patience, 'Confronting a terrible legacy: Australia's Japan problem and the MFP', *Policy Organisation and Society*, vol 4, Summer 1991, pp 25-32; and Joseph Wayne Smith, 'Megaprojects, environmental management and post-industrial urban illusions', *Ekistics*, vol 59, no 356-7, September-December 1992, pp 316-28. For a more general overview of Japanese investment and business presence in Australia see, for example, David W. Edgington, *Japanese business down under: Patterns of Japanese investment in Australia*, London and New York: Routledge, 1990; and Roger Farrell, 'Japanese foreign direct investment in real estate, 1985-1994', Pacific Economic Papers, no. 272, Canberra, Australia-Japan Research Centre, 1997; Roger Farrell, 'Organisation, motivations and case studies of Japanese direct investment in real estate, 1985-94', Pacific Economic Papers, no. 282, Canberra, Australia-Japan Research Centre, 1998; and Roger Farrell, 'Research issues in Japanese foreign direct investment', Policy Discussion Paper No. 24, Centre for International Economic Studies, University of Adelaide, 2000

<sup>8</sup> Ross Garnaut, *Australia and the northeast Asian ascendancy : Report to the prime minister and the minister for foreign affairs and trade*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1989, p 96

<sup>9</sup> The formation of Heart of a Nation is mentioned in passing in Phil Griffiths, 'Australian perceptions of Japan: the history of a racist phobia', *Socialist Review*, vol 3, 1990, pp 5-72; Alan Rix, 'Cry havoc?: Public opinion and recent Australia-Japan relations', *Policy Organisation and Society*, no 4, Summer 1991, pp 15-24; Jeremy Williams, 'Hostility or hospitality? An economic interpretation of reaction to Japanese investment in the sunshine state', in Morris Low and Helen Marriott eds., *Japanese science, technology and economic growth down under*, Clayton, Vic: Monash Asia Institute, Monash University, 1996, pp 120-38; and Alan Rix, *The Australia-Japan political alignment: 1952 to the present*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999, pp 105, 107-10. Opposition to Japanese investment on the Gold Coast is analysed in more detail in Joseph G Hajdu, 'Japanese capital on Australia's Gold Coast as a catalyst of a localist-globalist conflict on national identity', *Global Society*, vol 13, no 3, 1999, pp 327-47. However, Hajdu does not give an overly extensive account of the formation of Heart of a Nation and its activities. Instead he presents the association as an example of organised 'localism', which he describes as merely one part of the larger 'localist-globalist conflict' on the Gold Coast in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

traditional ideological arguments about developmentalism in Queensland<sup>10</sup>, it was soon speculated that the issue of foreign investment – often a code meaning Japanese investment specifically, would bring down the Ahern state government. While the agitation was intense and eventually resulted in a foreign land ownership register being implemented in Queensland, the public proved apathetic to Heart of a Nation. As the furore on the Gold Coast died down, the media, too, gradually lost interest. By the early 1990s the focus was less on the Japanese investment boom and more on the losses being sustained by some Japanese investors and the withdrawal of others from Queensland. As it became clear that the boom was over, ambivalence towards Japan again reigned. This was aptly demonstrated by the new global phrase of ‘Japan-passing’<sup>11</sup> in the mid-1990s, that is the sense that Japan was no longer, as Ezra Vogel had declared in 1979, ‘number one’ in terms of importance<sup>12</sup>.

Yet in the process of articulating opposition to Japanese investment on the Gold Coast, a multitude of negative images of Japan and the Japanese had been disseminated, not only by those on the far right but by ‘ordinary’ Australians. These images frequently re-emerged from Australia’s historical past, particularly earlier images of Japan from the ‘yellow peril’ era and World War II, with little of their strength diminished by the passing of time. However, they were also peculiarly adapted to the contemporary context, that is flavoured by contemporary issues such as the Australia’s connection with the Asian region and, indeed, globalisation and its impact on the nation. While the impact of these images of Japan is difficult to assess, it is likely that the Heart of a Nation phase contributed to a hardening of public attitudes against Japan in Queensland and, with local, regional and national media exposure for the association, in Australia more generally. Certainly, the phase can be considered as a precursor to the broadly national controversy surrounding the

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<sup>10</sup> The ideology of developmentalism is ‘based on the view that development – particularly resources development – is a good thing in itself’. The developmentalist approach has the ‘objective of increasing the rate at which “development” occurs and the scale of its occurrence, irrespective of the size and distribution of net benefits’: Roger Stuart, ‘Resources development policy: the case of Queensland’s export coal industry’, in Allan Patience ed., *The Bjelke-Petersen premiership, 1968-1983: Issues in public policy*, Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1985, p 54

<sup>11</sup> See discussion of ‘Japan passing’ or ‘Japan-nothing’ (*Nihon nashi*) in Gavan McCormack, ‘From number one to number nothing: Japan’s *fin de siècle* blues’, *Japanese Studies*, vol 18, no 1, 1998, pp 33-4

<sup>12</sup> Ezra Vogel, *Japan as number one: Lessons for America*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979  
Vogel, too, came to question his original determination: Ezra Vogel, *Is Japan still number one?*, Petalin Jaya, Malaysia: Pelanduk, 2000. See, also, Ezra Vogel, ‘Why Japan Is No Longer Number One’, speech given at Harvard University Asia Center, 19 September 2000.

multifunction polis, which became a significant issue of the Federal election campaign of 1990. However, with a move evoking the broadly anti-Asianisation discourse into which ‘Japan-bashing’ interpolated itself in Australia in the late 1980s, Bruce Whiteside, the convenor of Heart of a Nation, went on to gain some notoriety in the 1990s for his anti-Asian views, unsuccessfully standing for election based on a succession of far-right fringe platforms before finally forming the Pauline Hanson Support Movement in Queensland. As such, the Heart of a Nation phase in Queensland not only forms a crucial and frequently overlooked part of the spectrum of negative imagery on Japan in Australia in this period but it is also a formative part of the discourse on Asianisation and, indeed, anti-globalisation in Australia generally in the latter decade of the twentieth century<sup>13</sup>.

### **Opposition to Japanese Investment in Queensland**

While Japanese investment in Queensland had been in the spotlight, on and off, since the early 1970s, particularly relating to the Iwasaki Sangyô tourist resort development at Yeppoon and the alleged improper connections between Iwasaki and the Bjelke-Petersen government<sup>14</sup>, the issue of whether and to what extent Japanese investment was appropriate for Queensland started to come into focus again in 1987. Originating in the global economic boom in the second half of the 1980s, the flow of capital from Japan came to be described as ‘unprecedented in its volume’<sup>15</sup>. Prominent media reports in 1987 revealed, for example, that Japanese investors now controlled approximately \$2 billion of land in Queensland<sup>16</sup>. The perception that this was a high level was undoubtedly aided by such front page newspaper headlines such as ‘Japanese Land Grab Shock: 70 per cent of Coast’s

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<sup>13</sup> For discussion of ‘Asianisation’, see Alison Broinowski, ‘Asianization and its discontents’, *Meanjin*, vol 57, no 3, 1998, pp 440-52; Laksiri Jayasuriya and Kee Pookong, *The Asianisation of Australia?: Some facts about the myths*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1999; and Walker, loc. cit. For a discussion of Japanese investment in terms of globalisation see Hajdu, loc. cit.

<sup>14</sup> Nancy Viviani and Jim Selby, ‘The Iwasaki tourist development at Yeppoon’, Research Paper No. 5, Brisbane, Centre for the Study of Australian-Asian Relations, Griffith University, 1980. For more general allegations of Bjelke-Petersen’s inappropriate business dealings see, for example, Communist Party of Australia Queensland State Committee, *Under investigation: the business empire of Joh Bjelke-Petersen*, Fortitude Valley, Qld: Communist Party of Australia, 1976

<sup>15</sup> Hajdu, op. cit., p 330

<sup>16</sup> Don Peterson, ‘Australia. Buy now: Going cheap’, *Courier-Mail*, 23 September 1987, p 9

future prime resort land controlled from Tokyo'<sup>17</sup>. Yet in a survey of land ownership in 1990 (see table), the Queensland government concluded that less than 1 per cent of the total land area of Queensland was foreign-owned. And of that 1 per cent, Japanese investors were not even the main shareholders in terms of area<sup>18</sup>.

Table: Foreign land holders in Queensland (percentage share of estimated 1% owned)<sup>19</sup>

| Nation         | Area (%) | Value (%) |
|----------------|----------|-----------|
| United States  | 62.2     | 3.9       |
| United Kingdom | 12.3     | 8.0       |
| New Zealand    | N/A      | 13.7      |
| Japan          | 4.7      | 70.5      |

What the survey did reveal was that much of the Queensland land held by Japanese investors was both valuable and visible. The editor of the regional *Gold Coast Bulletin* daily newspaper, for example, declared the Gold Coast as the 'most enticing' area in the nation to 'foreigners with lots of money in their land-starved, currency-exchange-boosted portfolios'<sup>20</sup>. Japanese, too, were very noticeable. The permanent Japanese population of the Gold Coast increased from 203 in 1981 to 2 448 in 1991, albeit forming just less than one per cent of the population<sup>21</sup>. However, with Japan as Australia's largest tourist market<sup>22</sup>, the largely tourism-based city centres of the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast attracted a significant percentage of Japanese tourists.

<sup>17</sup> Paul Whittaker and Rod McGuirk, 'Japanese land grab shock: 70 per cent of Coast's prime resort land now controlled from Tokyo', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 27 May 1988, p 1

<sup>18</sup> Access Economics, 'Japanese investment in Australia', a report prepared for the Australia-Japan Foundation, 1991, p 17

<sup>19</sup> Table adapted from *ibid*

<sup>20</sup> Editor, Bulletin opinion, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 26 May 1988, p 6

<sup>21</sup> Hajdu, *loc. cit.*

<sup>22</sup> The Japanese tourist market generates some 24 per cent of all international visitors to Australia: Yvette Reisinger and Robert Z Waryszak, 'Tourists' perceptions of service in shops: Japanese tourists in Australia', *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, vol 22, no 5, 1994, p 20

With Australia's complex history with Japan, it was almost inevitable that the influx of Japanese investment and Japanese themselves into Queensland, or at least perceptions of high levels of both, would generate some degree of backlash. In a state where political discourse was often dominated by discussion of the merits of developmentalism<sup>23</sup>, it was not surprising that many of the arguments raised against Japanese investment were based on cogent assessments that such investment was posing serious economic questions. One significant complaint concerned the impact of investment on land values. The free-spending attitude of wealthy Japanese investors, it was argued, was having an inflationary impact on land values in both rural and urban areas, making it more difficult for the Australian purchaser. Queensland graziers, for example, called for foreign investment in land to be restricted because of the apparent inflation in land values that it had caused<sup>24</sup>. The cause of this inflation in urban areas, according to one journalist, was that the Japanese appeared willing to 'pay ridiculous prices for anything with four walls and a roof'<sup>25</sup>. Even a few Japanese agreed. Tanaka Jun'ichiro, the head of the Mitsui Real Estate Development Company, commented to the Brisbane *Courier-Mail* newspaper that '[t]he way Japanese real estate dealers raise the prices of residential housing must appear barbaric to the developed countries at which it is directed'<sup>26</sup>. Another complaint made about Japanese investment concerned the tendency of Japanese investors to vertically integrate their investments, particularly in the tourism industry. Vertical integration, it was argued, resulted in a significant portion of the benefits from investment flowing back to Japan rather than remaining in the state<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> Patricia Smith notes that it is a 'well-documented contention that Queensland politics are principally about "bread and butter" issues of development, involving reconciliation of competing demands for resources': Patricia Smith, 'Queensland's political culture', in Allan Patience ed., *The Bjelke-Petersen premiership, 1968-1983: Issues in public policy*, Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1985, p 27. The Bjelke-Petersen government was criticised by some for being a 'development-at-any-price government': Stuart, op. cit., p 53

<sup>24</sup> Juanita Phillips, 'The riddle of land ownership', *Courier-Mail*, 8 June 1988, p 9. See also discussion of a Gold Coast speech by John McAuliffe, the retiring president of the Australian Institute of Valuers, in which he warned of an 'inflationary trend' because of Asian investment generally: Malcolm Brown, 'Japanese investors increase holdings', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 May 1988, p 2

<sup>25</sup> Ross Gittings, 'Invasion? Phooey - it's our salvation', *Sunday Mail*, 26 June 1988, p 14.

<sup>26</sup> See Tanaka's comments in Peter Wilson, Jamie Walker, and Suzanne Nelson, 'Japan land chief seeks truce over invest row', *Courier-Mail*, 14 June 1988, p 1

<sup>27</sup> The Queensland deputy opposition leader, Tom Burns, for example, suggested that the vertical integration of Japanese investment would soon make Australia the 'Spain of the Pacific', with nary a yen remaining in Australia: Hedley Thomas, 'Sell-off brings no benefit - Burns', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 28 May 1988, p 7

However, opposition to Japanese investment in Queensland was not solely articulated because of the economic detriments that were perceived to emanate from such investment. Others based their opposition on their understanding of historical Australian-Japanese relations, Japan's national character and the implications this character had for Australia. Specifically, it was posited that Japan's increasing connection with Australia through investment would have a permanent and negative impact on Australia's national identity and culture, if it was not already doing so. As Hugh McKay has argued, '[n]othing sharpens our tribal sense like a threat to submerge it in some larger identity'<sup>28</sup> and Japan was easily presented as forming such a larger identity. Parodying a famous tourism campaign, comedian Gerry Connolly joked, for example, 'Ah, Queensland, beautiful one day, Japanese the next!'<sup>29</sup>. Others treated the topic with less levity and Japanese investment was labelled in some sections of the media as a 'Japanvasion'<sup>30</sup>, a 'yen menace'<sup>31</sup>, and as 'economic herpes'<sup>32</sup> which was carried by 'financial samurai'<sup>33</sup>. With its strong rhetorical similarity to both the notion of the 'yellow peril' and to anti-Japanese propaganda from World War II, the 'Japanvasion' theory easily prompted the re-emergence of historically-situated negative images of Japan. A survey conducted by the Japanese investment company Daikyo Kanko in Queensland in early 1989 revealed, for example, that 45 per cent of respondents 'hated' the Japanese, both as people and investors in the state<sup>34</sup>. Not surprisingly, then, many correspondents to Queensland newspapers invoked memories of World War II as a part of their opposition to Japanese investment, underlining their rejection of Japan's infringement upon land which was quintessentially 'Australian'. One such letter-writer to the *Courier-Mail* in 1988 declared:

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<sup>28</sup> Hugh Mackay, 'Tribal rivalries block path to global village', *Australian Weekend Review*, 16-17 April 1994, p 16

<sup>29</sup> Jeff Penberthy, 'Invasion of the Gold Coast', *Time*, 1 August 1988, p 41

<sup>30</sup> Louise Pemble, 'World focus on stance against "Japanvasion"', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 21 May 1988, p 7

<sup>31</sup> Peter Morley, 'Putting the lid on the "yen menace"', *Courier-Mail*, 28 May 1988, p 8

<sup>32</sup> Citing a letter received by the editor, Juanita Phillips, 'Old prejudices and new outrage', *Courier-Mail*, 7 June 1988, p 9

<sup>33</sup> Peter Clarke, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 7 May 1988, p 6

<sup>34</sup> Andrew Stewart, 'Survey highlights hatred of Japanese', *Canberra Times*, 11 March 1989, p 9

The Japanese said after losing World War II that they would own Australia in 100 years. After only 43 years they are well on the way to doing just that ... I shed a tear to see foreign powers buying up the land which we have worked, fought, and in some cases died for<sup>35</sup>.

It was often argued that permitting or acceding to the sale of Australian land to Japanese investors constituted a callous disregard for the thousands of Australians who had suffered and perished at the hands of the Japanese during the war. One writer wrote, for example, that ‘the silent voices of our dead demand we keep our part of the bargain. We shall not break faith with them’<sup>36</sup>. A widow of a prisoner-of-war killed by the Japanese wrote that she soon ‘must leave the [Gold] Coast, which I love so much, and go bush ... I will go away so I won’t see the Japanese have our beautiful Australia’<sup>37</sup>.

Japanese investment was also often thought to be a precursor to more serious attempts by Japan to influence or otherwise gain control over Australia, which would result in the permanent of Australia’s national identity. This assumption of intent on the part of Japan was rarely questioned. The secretary-treasurer of a former prisoners-of-war association on the Gold Coast, for example, claiming to represent more than three hundred members, warned readers of the *Gold Coast Bulletin* that:

The Japanese entry into Australia is but the thin edge of the wedge and everybody who thinks otherwise is naïve, to say the least. Once becoming suitably ensconced in the Australian scene they would then exert pressures [sic] at all government and council levels to achieve their financial objectives<sup>38</sup>.

For this writer, Japan’s intent was obvious because the ‘character of the Japanese people ... [had] not changed in one thousand years’<sup>39</sup>. Based on a similar assumption, another correspondent predicted a Japanese invasion of Australia designed to ‘protect their

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<sup>35</sup> F Ward, ‘The Japanese: Do they own Australia now?’ *Courier-Mail*, 15 February 1988, p 8

<sup>36</sup> Anne Ruscoe, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 17 May 1988, p 6

<sup>37</sup> N Anderson, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 12 May 1988, p 6

<sup>38</sup> David Barrett, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 28 May 1988, p 6

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*

investments', noting that Japan had invaded Korea in 1911 and Manchuria in 1936 in much the same manner<sup>40</sup>. Yet another wrote of having seen a Japanese tourist in Melbourne wearing a t-shirt with a picture of a rising sun superimposed over the Australian coat of arms and bearing the caption 'Australia, Outlying Island'<sup>41</sup>. Others were more perturbed by what they saw as the slow 'Japanisation' of Queensland through Japanese investment, particularly the escalating use of the Japanese language. One correspondent to the *Gold Coast Bulletin* opposed what he saw as a growing trend for Australian children to be harassed to learn Japanese by their parents<sup>42</sup>. Another correspondent complained that it was already difficult to find a job without speaking Japanese<sup>43</sup>. Yet another suggested that non-English speaking migrants to Australia would soon be learning Japanese, rather than English, to survive and then requested that the newspaper not print his or her name, as 'one day my children will need employment'<sup>44</sup>.

Aside from blaming Japan for the levels of Japanese investment, some correspondents to Queensland newspapers also blamed real estate agents, who had either permitted themselves to be overpowered by 'shrewd Japanese' negotiator-buyers or had gleefully succumbed to the lure of the yen<sup>45</sup>. The fact that many real estate agents tended to defend Japanese investment by pointing out that agitation against it did nothing but damage Queensland's reputation and disadvantage the economy, particularly the developmentally-driven economy of the Gold Coast, merely added to the perception that they were intent on feathering their own nests<sup>46</sup>. Strangely, the involvement of the vendors of land in these transactions was rarely, if ever, considered. By far the greater domestic target was government, both federal and state and local. In the 1980s a popular car bumper sticker had reportedly urged Queenslanders to 'See Queensland first, before Joh [Bjelke-Petersen] sells

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<sup>40</sup> Robert Stubbs, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 12 May 1988, p 6

<sup>41</sup> Peter Hailes, 'Brazen', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 3 June 1988, p 6. Hailes offered this anecdote to reinforce his argument against Japanese investment, intimating that, as it was being worn by a Japanese person, the t-shirt functioned to verify Japan's perception of Australia as an outlying island. However, it is likely that such a t-shirt, if it existed, was already a form of comedic protest against Japanese investment.

<sup>42</sup> Clarke, loc. cit.

<sup>43</sup> Anderson, loc. cit.

<sup>44</sup> 'Ex-NX 134 444', Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 7 May 1988, p 6

<sup>45</sup> 'Firms "giving in to shrewd Japanese"', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 10 June 1988, p 13

<sup>46</sup> See, for example, the Real Estate Institutes of Queensland and New South Wales 'pleading for a halt to the "hysteria" surrounding foreign ownership of Gold Coast land': Greg Stoltz, 'Call to halt "hysteria" over land sale to foreign buyers', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 1 June 1988, p 2

it all'<sup>47</sup>. In 1987-88, many concurred with this analysis. It is 'our leaders who are to blame', wrote one correspondent to the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, as 'we can't blame the Japanese for taking advantage of a business situation'<sup>48</sup>. Indeed, another complained, as the Japanese were merely doing a 'prime example of good business', Australians should be 'directing our dissatisfaction and concern at a government which allows so much to be sold to overseas interests'<sup>49</sup>. 'There can be no excuse for [sic] government inaction', wrote another, '[t]hey must be deaf as well as blind'<sup>50</sup>. This apparent inaction created a significant opening in public discourse, one which was a prime target for a dynamic populist individual or group to insert themselves into the debate.

### **'Heart of a Nation' in 1988**

In 1988, the *Gold Coast Bulletin* began running a regular 'Japanvasion' section in their letters to the editor page, which became a popular forum for community members on the Gold Coast to express their opinions regarding Japanese investment. One of the earliest correspondents to this section was Bruce Rugby Whiteside, then a fifty-four-year-old second-hand clothes dealer on the Gold Coast. In a letter to the editor in early March 1988, he accused readers of being 'a pack of gutless, apathetic crawlers' in embracing Japan's money instead of the 'Anzac spirit'<sup>51</sup>. He repeated this sentiment in a letter in early May and invited like-minded readers interested in forming a pressure group to telephone him<sup>52</sup> and thus Queensland's most prominent anti-Japanese movement of recent memory – Heart of a Nation – was born.

The *Gold Coast Bulletin* began what became regular coverage of the activities of Heart of a Nation when it reported on 11 May that Whiteside had received seventy-six calls

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<sup>47</sup> David and Wheelwright, op. cit., p 183. See mention of this slogan, also, in Stuart, op. cit., p 53

<sup>48</sup> Stubbs, loc. cit.

<sup>49</sup> Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 17 May 1988, p 6

<sup>50</sup> Ruscoe, loc. cit.

<sup>51</sup> Bruce Whiteside, 'A protest by one who remembers', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 16 March 1988, p 6

<sup>52</sup> Bruce Whiteside, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 7 May 1988, p. 6

expressing support<sup>53</sup>. As a consequence, he organised a public meeting to be held in the Great Hall of the local Miami High School on the Gold Coast on 24 May, designed to give ‘ordinary Australians’ the chance to ‘express fears over a growing Japanese presence in Australia’, including the ‘effects of Japanese ownership of Australian land, Japanese investment in Australia, Japanese immigration, the teaching of Japanese language in schools, and the erection of Japanese signs and general advertising on the Gold Coast’<sup>54</sup>. After considerable publicity, the public meeting at Miami High School attracted somewhere between thirteen hundred and fifteen hundred participants and was covered internationally by the major Japanese daily newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun* and Agence France Press<sup>55</sup>. Despite a sensational disruption to the meeting caused by a bomb threat, rumoured to be linked to Japanese interests, Bruce Whiteside received a standing ovation for his speech, in which he called for the Federal government retrospectively to amend the constitution to ban the sale of land to foreign investors<sup>56</sup>.

From the very beginning, Bruce Whiteside attempted to disavow the idea that his stance against Japanese investment in Queensland was based on racism against the Japanese. He was not a ‘racist’ but rather the ‘son of an Anzac ... fighting to protect the lifestyle for which Australians gave up their lives’<sup>57</sup>. Regardless of his rationalisation of his beliefs as those of a patriotic ‘Anzac’, Whiteside’s public statements and policies soon disclosed an agenda that in fact incorporated racism against the Japanese, if not all Asians. While he announced prior to his Miami meeting that it would not be a ‘forum for

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<sup>53</sup> Louise Pemble, 'Backlash against Japanese "invasion"', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 11 May 1988, p 3

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Louise Pemble, 'Bomb threat disrupts "Japanvasion" meeting', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 25 May 1988, p 3. The *Gold Coast Bulletin* reported fifteen hundred while the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported attendance of thirteen hundred participants : Pemble, 'World focus', p 7; and Margo Kingston, 'Revolt in the rising sunshine state', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 May 1988, p 1

<sup>56</sup> Pemble, 'Bomb threat', p 3. The speech was reprinted in a full-page newspaper advertisement for members and financial support: Heart of a Nation, 'Advertisement', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 4 June 1988, p 69. The advertisement clearly described Heart of a Nation as an incorporated association. However, Heart of a Nation’s official incorporation records clearly show that the association was not granted the status of an incorporated association until 5 September 1988: Queensland Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading, Office of Fair Trading, record IA04699. This would likely make the advertisement and any other reference to Heart of a Nation as an incorporated association prior to 5 September 1988 an offence under section 30 of the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981* (Qld).

<sup>57</sup> Pemble, 'Backlash', p 3. Although the usual use of ‘Anzac’ is to refer to veterans of World War I, Whiteside clearly intended an ‘Anzac’ to include anyone who had fought against Japan during World War II.

disgruntled ex-prisoners of war' or anyone 'wanting to dwell on past war atrocities'<sup>58</sup>, in an earlier letter to the *Gold Coast Bulletin* he wrote 'on behalf of all those who perished at the hands of the Japanese, I would charge all those who think as I do to stand up and voice their protest' against Japanese investment<sup>59</sup>. The apparent change in Whiteside's focus by the time of his Miami speech, from opposing Japanese investment to opposing all foreign investment, seemed deliberately calculated to deflect the charges of racism already being issued by his critics; only references to Japanese investment were used to illustrate his arguments and the real issue continued to be the levels of Japanese, rather than foreign investment at large.

Whiteside's fears regarding Japanese investment were often consistent with the 'politics of paranoia'<sup>60</sup> involving race practised by the far right in Australia during the 1980s. He saw himself as a populist leader in the tradition of Queensland populism, that is as a leader in the vanguard of those confronting the financially-powerful 'other' of Japan, a confrontation which, in his view, was not being adequately recognised by normal political processes in Queensland specifically or Australia generally<sup>61</sup>. He criticised the non-involvement of many political leaders in the issue of Japanese investment, commenting to the *Gold Coast Bulletin* that 'Many of the people who have contacted me say they have a gut feeling about the Japanese and have written to politicians expressing that concern and all they get in reply are letters saying "your letter has been acknowledged"'<sup>62</sup>. Whiteside contested this feeling of powerlessness, arguing that Australians had to 'challenge politicians who fiddle while Rome burns'<sup>63</sup> and, in applying for incorporation of Heart of a

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<sup>58</sup> Pemble, 'World focus', p 7

<sup>59</sup> Russell Deiley, 'Bruce scorns racist tag to stand up for Australians', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 2 June 1988, p 4

<sup>60</sup> This phrase was not a clinical term but was aimed at evoking the 'qualities of heated exaggeration, suspiciousness and conspiratorial fantasy' in this certain kind of political style: Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays*, New York: Knopf, 1965, p. 3. See also Andrew Markus, *Race: John Howard and the remaking of Australia*, Crows Nest NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2001, p 141

<sup>61</sup> James Walter and Kay Dickie contend that 'Queensland's history of long-term underdevelopment, and then comparatively recent prosperity, produces a climate conducive to right populism' and the 'emergence of ... leader[s] whose style and appeal resonate with that climate'. Just as Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen was able to 'play on an historical disquiet associated with long-term economic disadvantage and vulnerability ... by "naming" present threats: dissidents within the state', Whiteside appealed for action with his vision of a similar threat of the 'other' within on the Gold Coast: James Walter and Kay Dickie, 'Johannes Bjelke-Petersen: A political profile', in Allan Patience ed., *The Bjelke-Petersen premiership, 1968-1983: Issues in public policy*, Melbourne: Longman Cheshire, 1985, pp 43, 46

<sup>62</sup> Pemble, 'Backlash', p 3

<sup>63</sup> Hedley Thomas, "'Japanvasion' fighters may go to polls", *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 26 May 1988, p 2

Nation, he recorded the 'principal activity' of the group as lobbying 'governments to act as the voice of the people'<sup>64</sup>. He also disliked the media, labelling many in the press as 'avid liars' for the way in which they reported on the topic of Heart of a Nation, particularly the media's accusations of racism<sup>65</sup>.

While Whiteside attempted to 'deracialise' his attitudes by reference to the 'voice of the people', to his vision of what the Gold Coast community should be, race clearly remained at the core of his fears. Unlike New Zealand investors who were 'full-blooded cousins' to Australians<sup>66</sup>, Whiteside insisted that the Japanese were 'villains' because 'they are the ones who are wielding the big money ... [t]hey have the financial clout to alter our way of life forever'<sup>67</sup>. During the Miami meeting Whiteside said, for example:

Many ordinary Australians perceive that the Japanese involvement with this country has a wider implication that the mere settling of a few thousand immigrants. Japan possesses the financial clout to change our way of life forever. It has the ability to unsettle the sovereign people and to influence the decisions of government ... Many of us have grave doubts about the long term objectives and aspirations of the Japanese nation. Much of what is taking place today tends to reinforce rather than dispel those fears<sup>68</sup>.

It is difficult to construct a demographic picture of those Gold Coast residents who found Whiteside's vision concerning Japanese investment compelling, as there was no polling of attendees at the Miami meeting. There are also no public records of the membership of Heart of a Nation other than Bruce Whiteside's application to Queensland's Office of Fair

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<sup>64</sup> Application for Incorporation, no 5346, 4 July 1988: Queensland Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading, Office of Fair Trading, record IA04699.

<sup>65</sup> Bruce Whiteside, *Destiny aborted: How they eliminated the people's politician*, 2000, <http://www.gwb.com.au/2000/white/book.htm>, now preserved at the National Library of Australia's Pandora project, <http://pandora.nla.gov.au/nph-arch/2000/Z2000-Jun-1/http://www.gwb.com.au/2000/white/book.htm>, accessed 3 February 2004. Describing an interview on Channel Nine, for example, Whiteside commented, 'I was thinking about the kids being deprived of their land and she [the interviewer] was talking about racism. Then I cut loose ...!': Hajdu, op. cit., p 336

<sup>66</sup> Phillips, 'Old prejudices', p 9

<sup>67</sup> Deiley, loc. cit.

<sup>68</sup> See the reprint of Whiteside's speech, quoted in Heart of a Nation, loc. cit.

Trading to incorporate as an association. This application notes that Heart of a Nation's interim management committee consisted of Whiteside, his wife, Iris Winifred Whiteside (self-employed of Miami), Clifford Stanley Barker (retired of Burleigh Waters) and Crofton Heath Kerr (self-employed of Burleigh Waters)<sup>69</sup>. However, a few assumptions can be made by deconstructing Whiteside's appeals to 'ordinary' Australians to display the 'Anzac spirit' and join him in speaking out to protect the 'Australian way of life'; his theories regarding Japan's 'long term objectives and aspirations'; and his policies for political action and legal reform. While Whiteside was reportedly not a great orator<sup>70</sup>, he did have the knack of being able to interpret the growing public reaction on the Gold Coast and to seize the appropriate moment. More importantly, Whiteside had the cachet of appearing himself as a quintessentially 'ordinary' Australian. He was white, married, middle-aged and a self-employed local businessman. Despite his calls for supporters to lobby their local members of parliament, he was distrustful of the establishment, as were many during this era of Queensland politics. For those who were unaware of the legal complexities of his proposed policy to halt foreign investment in Australia, he had the drawcard of an apparently straightforward solution: constitutional amendment. This combination of appearance, beliefs and policies gave him a certain populist appeal to many in the Gold Coast community.

One group of Whiteside adherents would almost certainly have been those who, through ignorance or otherwise, held racist or xenophobic attitudes towards all non-white Australians and non-Australians and few qualms about airing them publicly. Many of Whiteside's supporters, for example, were adamant that Heart of a Nation's campaign was not based on racism against the Japanese. One correspondent to the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, for example, was indignant about the media's attempts to 'paint a racist overtone into Mr Whiteside's campaign' as 'anyone familiar with the movement knows ... that taint is completely non-existent in the entire campaign'<sup>71</sup>. In reality, however, Whiteside's

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<sup>69</sup> Application for Incorporation, no 5346, 4 July 1988: Queensland Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading, Office of Fair Trading, record IA04699.

<sup>70</sup> One attendee at the meeting described Whiteside as 'no orator. His delivery was shaky and inarticulate. ... In spite of how much I agreed with his words, his performance simply did not grab me. Oratory is an art. Ergo, an artist must be found.': James Wallace, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 28 May 1988, p 6

<sup>71</sup> K B Burnett, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 28 May 1988, p 6

suspicions that Japanese investment formed part of a larger conspiratorial plan for Australia and his proposal to prohibit the sale of land to non-Australians would have drawn approval from existing members of racist organisations, such as National Action and the League of Rights, as well as political parties on the far right, such as the Citizens' Electoral Councils of Australia, which were also established in Queensland in 1988<sup>72</sup>.

A significantly larger group, however, were likely to have been attracted to Whiteside because his focus on Japanese investment seemed to give voice to their own personal unease specifically regarding Japan, or at the very least large-scale developmental changes in their city. It is here that the demographic features of the predominantly tourism-based Gold Coast area, specifically its population growth, significantly large population of retirees, trend of lower incomes and high unemployment rates<sup>73</sup> were probably influential. Many correspondents to the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, for example, made reference – often using the term 'Nippon', rather than 'Japan' – in opposing Japanese investment to their own experiences or the experiences of family members as former prisoners-of-war of Japan during World War II. Others based their opposition on more recent personal experience, often indicating that they felt marginalised in their Gold Coast community as they struggled to buy property or to obtain employment without speaking Japanese. The changing character of the Gold Coast was raised as an issue, with the suggestion that Japanese investment was somehow threatening the Australian identity of the city<sup>74</sup>, that is transforming the Gold Coast into 'the Japanese Gold Coast'<sup>75</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup> The Citizens' Electoral Councils of Australia (CEC) oppose globalisation, multiculturalism and the existing racial vilification legislation in Australia, amongst other policies: Citizens Electoral Council of Australia, Official Website, <http://www.cecaust.com.au/>, accessed 13 February 2003. Less openly, it promotes the concept of the international Jewish conspiracy. Since the early 1990s, the CEC has been aligned with the controversial American economist Lyndon LaRouche, who has been jailed in the United States on charges of conspiracy.

<sup>73</sup> Patrick Mullins has noted, for example, that the Gold Coast evolved in the late twentieth century as a tourist centre and was one of the fastest growing cities in terms of population in 1976-86. In addition, the Gold Coast had a significantly larger retired population than other cities; some 17.1 per cent were aged over 65 years in 1986 compared to 11.9 per cent in Adelaide or 3.3 per cent in Darwin, which partially accounted for lower incomes in the area. Unemployment was also high, at 16 per cent, compared to 9.5 percent in Brisbane and 8.6 percent in Sydney: Patrick Mullins, 'Tourist cities as new cities: Australia's Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast', *Australian Planner*, vol 28, no 3, September 1990, pp 38-40

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, Paul Whittaker, 'Some fear Coast could lose its identity - survey', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 16 April 1987, p 3

<sup>75</sup> H Lewis, 'Too late?' *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 16 April 1987, p 6. Similarly, another correspondent to the *Gold Coast Bulletin* wrote, 'This is supposed to be Australia, not a larger extension of Nippon': D Chilton, 'Australia deserves a better fate', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 19 March 1988, p 6

Lastly, it is likely that some supporters had no ideological positions or personal complaints but were merely caught up in the populist momentum and the excitement of being involved in internationally-publicised civic affairs. What disturbed a Japanese reporter who attended the Miami meeting the most, however, was that among the attendees were ‘people friendly to Japan[,] who have sent their children to Japan to study or do business with the Japanese’<sup>76</sup>.

The most often articulated complaint against Bruce Whiteside and his Heart of a Nation movement was the charge of racism. Commentator Ross Gittings, writing for Brisbane’s *Sunday-Mail*, characterised the overall anti-Japanese atmosphere at the Miami meeting as a ‘replay of the old argument about foreign investment and wicked multinationals, but with the added spice of racial intolerance’<sup>77</sup>. The emotional rhetoric of the meeting was apparently intense, particularly after the bomb scare had forced a temporary halt to the proceedings, and it was later described by some spectators as a ‘bash the Jap’<sup>78</sup> or an ‘anti-Nippon, sabre-rattling’ exercise<sup>79</sup>. It was reported that the Japanese were openly depicted as the ‘yellow peril’, as ‘ruthless’, ‘cruel’ and ‘intrusive’<sup>80</sup>. One participant read out a poem:

We who come from the land called Down Under  
watch in total horror as Japanese plunder.  
Japan has had their eyes on us for a while,  
their true intentions should really rile<sup>81</sup>.

Adding to the overall anti-Japanese atmosphere at the meeting, a few participants who questioned the specific focus on Japan were reported to have been either denied the opportunity to speak or were jeered at by the audience when they did. French tourist Anthony Dupont, for example, asked the audience why New Zealanders or Europeans were

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<sup>76</sup> ‘Australia like “nation at war”’, *Courier-Mail*, 14 June 1988, p 4

<sup>77</sup> Gittings, loc. cit.

<sup>78</sup> Thomas, “Japanvasion” fighters’, p 2

<sup>79</sup> P Stenchion, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 28 May 1988, p 6

<sup>80</sup> Thomas, “Japanvasion” fighters’, p 2

<sup>81</sup> *ibid*

not included in the 'anti-foreign ownership rhetoric' and was reportedly 'booed and jostled from the microphone'<sup>82</sup>. American school-teacher and radio host Charles Brooks accused the audience of racism and was 'shouted down', told to 'get out of the country' and branded a 'Jap-lover'<sup>83</sup>.

The *Gold Coast Bulletin* was also taken to task by some readers for its championing of Whiteside and his campaign. The extended coverage of Heart of a Nation often appeared similar to free advertising. An editorial applauded Whiteside's 'sincerity' and 'dedication' in 'arousing the conscience of a nation' and concluded by wishing 'Good luck – and action – to him and his People Power'<sup>84</sup>. One reader responded by awarding '[n]o kudos ... to the *Bulletin* for its front page and editorial support of the Sieg-heilers who applaud the dangerous rhetoric coming out of the ... woodwork'<sup>85</sup>. Another informed the editor that:

The *Bulletin* Opinion (May 26) and continued support of the activities of Bruce Whiteside and his "Gang of 1500" makes me feel sick. I find it amazing that your newspaper ... would wholeheartedly dedicate itself to supporting and promoting this man and his racist cause<sup>86</sup>.

To illustrate their charges of racism, opponents of Bruce Whiteside took every opportunity to point out one very distinctive element of hypocrisy in Whiteside's argument. Although Whiteside appeared to be an 'ordinary' Australian and directed his call for action to other 'ordinary' Australians, it quickly emerged that he was in fact a New Zealander. Reactions to this revelation were mixed. Fellow New Zealander, property and investment consultant Warren Hodson described Whiteside's stance 'absolute rubbish', as New Zealanders were

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<sup>82</sup> Kingston, 'Revolt', p 1

<sup>83</sup> Thomas, "'Japanvasion" fighters', p 1. Interviewed later by the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, Brooks said he was prepared to lead a campaign against the anti-Japanese land ownership movement organised by Bruce Whiteside: Hedley Thomas, 'Coast teacher ready to join counter-revolt', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 27 May 1988, p 7. Brooks used his regular one hour radio show on the local Christian Community Radio to speak out against Whiteside and Heart of a Nation but, after receiving legal advice regarding possible defamation of Whiteside, the station axed Brooks' show and he resigned in protest: Hedley Thomas, 'Radio show axed, announcer quits over land "buy-up"', *Courier-Mail*, 2 June 1988, p 15.

<sup>84</sup> Editor, *Bulletin* Opinion, loc. cit.

<sup>85</sup> Derek DuMaurier, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 28 May 1988, p 6

<sup>86</sup> Lloyd Bond, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 28 May 1988, p 6

by far the ‘busier’ investors on the Gold Coast<sup>87</sup>. One correspondent to the *Gold Coast Bulletin* wrote bitterly that at least the Japanese were coming to Queensland to create jobs, not ‘take jobs like the Kiwis’<sup>88</sup>. Another was tongue-in-cheek with his advice for Whiteside:

Please don’t throw out the Japanese, Mr Whiteside. Next thing you know, people will want to deport the Irish, Italians, Greeks, English and Americans. God, all that will be left will be a handful of ill-informed, hypocritical, selfish, unthinking, narrow-minded New Zealanders<sup>89</sup>.

Jana Wendt, then the host of Channel Nine’s *A Current Affair*, also made much of Whiteside’s citizenship when he appeared as a guest on 25 May, the night after the Miami meeting. Whiteside later admitted that he handled the issue of his citizenship badly by replying that ‘[f]irst and foremost I’m a New Zealander’<sup>90</sup>. He claimed to be saddened by the extent of the racist backlash against Japanese investment, particularly by the anti-Japanese slogans that had been found daubed on some Japanese businesses on the Gold Coast. A spokesperson for Daikyo Kanko, for example, reluctantly admitted to the *Gold Coast Bulletin* that there had been an ‘incident’ in the lobby of building Daikyo occupied four days after the Miami meeting<sup>91</sup>. Others in the building were more forthcoming, telling the media of seeing ‘Japanese big business go home, tourists OK!’ scrawled on the lobby walls in red paint<sup>92</sup>.

With intense public interest regarding the level of Japanese investment and the racial rhetoric surrounding the debate over its alleged detriments to Queensland, the issue of Japanese investment could not remain unpoliticised for long. It is likely that Bruce

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<sup>87</sup> In Hodson’s opinion – which was undoubtedly motivated by some occupational self-interest – most of those protesting against Japanese investment were short-sighted, not interested in the development of the Gold Coast and would be ‘happier with the region being turned into a tent village’: ‘Expert raps “tent village” mentality’, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 27 May 1988, p 7.

<sup>88</sup> Sid Green, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 3 June 1988, p 6

<sup>89</sup> R Newsome, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 28 May 1988, p 6

<sup>90</sup> Deiley, loc. cit.

<sup>91</sup> ‘Japanese firm hit by racist slogans’, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 28 May 1988, p 4

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.*

Whiteside and Heart of a Nation would have received far less media attention had not the state seat of South Coast recently been vacated. Both the National Party government and the Labor Party opposition had now to formulate policies to take account of what the media was reporting to be the biggest issue of the by-election campaign: foreign investment in Queensland or, more accurately, Japanese investment in Queensland<sup>93</sup>. But as the noticeably pro-Whiteside *Gold Coast Bulletin* editorialised during the campaign for South Coast, '[Gold Coast] area politicians, Federal, State and local, tended to be conspicuous [on this issue] only by their silence'<sup>94</sup>. While it is likely that most politicians absented themselves from the issue of Japanese investment for the reasons that Queensland was openly encouraging and benefiting from Japanese investment in the state, such silence tended to confirm for Whiteside and his adherents that there was some level of political blindness about Japan or, at worst, that sheer opportunism motivated the non-involvement of political figures in the state.

The most prominent political endorsement of Bruce Whiteside and Heart of a Nation came from the Queensland Labor Party opposition, with the deputy leader Tom Burns attending the Miami meeting. When interviewed later, Burns expressed great satisfaction that public opinion now seemed so in accord with his own attitude to Japanese investment, which he had opposed since the Iwasaki Sangyô development at Yeppoon in the 1970s<sup>95</sup>. He called for the immediate reintroduction of the *Aliens Act*, which had been repealed in 1965, to ban foreign investment in land, except for cases involving special dispensation from the government<sup>96</sup>. The only benefits Australians had been receiving from Japanese investment, Burns argued, were 'overpriced real estate, a housing and rental shortage in tourist areas and a loss of Australian control over our economic future'<sup>97</sup>.

It was up to a dumped Queensland National Party cabinet minister, Don Lane, to make the statement that the National Party would lose the by-election and, eventually, lose office if it did not 'move to control foreign ownership', as 'large-scale Japanese intrusion'

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<sup>93</sup> See, for example, Phillips, 'Old prejudices', p 9

<sup>94</sup> Editor, *Bulletin Opinion*, loc. cit.

<sup>95</sup> Kingston, 'Revolt', p 1

<sup>96</sup> Margo Kingston, 'Foreign ownership Qld poll issue', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 May 1988, p 7

<sup>97</sup> Thomas, 'Sell-off', p 7

was a ‘grassroots, gut’ issue in the campaign<sup>98</sup>. *Courier-Mail* columnist Peter Morley agreed, saying ‘[n]aked racism or otherwise, the anti-Japanese investment feeling in Queensland has the potential to bring down the National Party Government’<sup>99</sup>. What Queenslanders wanted, Don Lane argued was legislation on foreign land ownership now<sup>100</sup>. While the Labor Party leader, Wayne Goss, came out in support of a foreign land register, the National Party Lands Minister, William Glasson, thought it was necessary to consider whether setting up a register would be beneficial or not<sup>101</sup>. While the National Party had favoured a land register for years<sup>102</sup>, it had not been able to introduce one due to the vehement opposition of Bjelke-Petersen, the previous party leader. Even now, according to Glasson, the media’s claims that the Japanese were ‘literally buying out the area’ were not supported by evidence on foreign land ownership already gathered by the state government. The Federal treasurer, Paul Keating, was drawn into the debate when a spokesperson was forced to state that, despite increasing public controversy in Queensland, ‘tighter’ foreign investment rules were not being considered at the federal level<sup>103</sup>.

Eventually two further public meetings concerning Japanese investment on the Gold Coast were held: one chaired by Federal Liberal Party member Peter White and the other by Brian Shepherd, a candidate for National Party pre-selection for the vacant seat of South Coast<sup>104</sup>. Bruce Whiteside, invited to speak by both convenors, refused both invitations and drew heavy criticism. ‘I find this an extraordinary attitude’, Peter White stated, ‘given that the objectives of the Heart of a Nation movement include helping educate people’<sup>105</sup>. Brian Shepherd, on the other hand, went on the attack, noting that it was very interesting that the official vice-chairman of Heart of a Nation was the recently-elected state member for Barambah, Trevor Perrett of the far right Citizens’ Electoral Council<sup>106</sup>. Perhaps, Shepherd suggested, Heart of a Nation was merely a front to entice, or perhaps delude, voters into

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<sup>98</sup> Tony Koch, ‘Control Japanese or lose seats: Lane’, *Courier-Mail*, 27 May 1988, pp 1-2

<sup>99</sup> Morley, loc. cit.

<sup>100</sup> Koch, op. cit., p 1

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> A state land register had been mooted as early as 1981: Matt Robbins, ‘State Plans Register of Foreign Land’, *Courier-Mail*, 17 November 1981, p 3

<sup>103</sup> Tess Livingstone, ‘Keating rules out moves to stop Japanese’, *Courier-Mail*, 5 June 1988, p 5

<sup>104</sup> Rod McGuirk, ‘Meetings aim to tell land ownership “truth”’, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 3 June 1988, p 7

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>106</sup> Rod McGuirk, ‘Shades of Hitler in investment uproar’, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 7 June 1988, p 7

supporting the Citizens' Electoral Council in the forthcoming South Coast election<sup>107</sup>. In reply, Bruce Whiteside declared that Heart of a Nation had no political affiliations, although he admitted that the association's secretary had been Brian McDermott, the organiser of the South Coast Citizens' Electoral Council<sup>108</sup>.

The fact that Heart of a Nation had been in existence for about three weeks at the most and already boasted a 'former secretary' is an indication of how quickly the organisation was starting to lose internal coherence as well as public support. The end of Whiteside's aspirations for constitutional reform came almost as quickly as the organisation was formed. On 11 June, less than three weeks after his triumphant Miami meeting, a rather petulant Bruce Whiteside told the *Gold Coast Bulletin* it was likely that he would bow out of the movement the following week because 'apathetic' Australians were only contributing moral and not financial support to the organisation<sup>109</sup>.

Whiteside's threatened withdrawal did not mean the end of the focus on Japanese investment in Queensland that year and nor was it the end of the reforms regarding investment that he suggested and endorsed. A foreign-ownership land register was eventually established in Queensland in 1988<sup>110</sup>, which went on to confirm that while Japanese investors had the greatest monetary investment, American investors had the highest percentage of investment in terms of land area in the state<sup>111</sup>. Moreover, echoing Whiteside's policy to ban the sale of land to foreign investors, the Queensland government announced in 1990 that it was investigating whether the sale of freehold land could, indeed, be banned<sup>112</sup>, a legislative move that was eventually discarded as unworkable<sup>113</sup>.

However, the populist momentum for Heart of a Nation itself had largely dissipated. In the August 1988 by-election for South Coast, Bruce Whiteside stood as an independent but he was not expected to and did not poll well because of public distrust of his recent and

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<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> Brett Free, "'Apathy' by Aussies may force Whiteside to bow out', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 11 June 1988, p 2

<sup>110</sup> For discussion of the foreign land register see, for example, Robin Lim, 'Japanese investment in real estate in Australia with specific reference to Queensland', unpublished Honours thesis, University of Queensland, 1990

<sup>111</sup> Tony Koch, 'Freehold ban inquiry by government', *Courier-Mail*, 27 June 1990, p 1

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Jamie Walker, 'De Lacy Cools On Foreign Leasehold', *Australian*, 20 July 1990, p 3

hasty conversion from New Zealand citizenship to Australian<sup>114</sup>. Nevertheless, Whiteside continued his personal crusade against Japanese investment, albeit now often described by the media as an ‘Australia-for-Australians’ campaigner<sup>115</sup>. In early 1989, for example, Whiteside lambasted Prime Minister Bob Hawke as a ‘fifth columnist’ intent on creating a ‘Yellow Australia’ because of Hawke’s support of Japanese investment<sup>116</sup>. He organised another public meeting, which attracted about 400 people<sup>117</sup> and was disrupted by a short power outage, which he again attributed to ‘sabotage’<sup>118</sup>. Whiteside attacked Gold Coast politicians for their lack of interest and support for the meeting<sup>119</sup> but, interestingly, banned American school-teacher and former radio host Charles Brooks, his long-term opponent, from attending<sup>120</sup>. In 1990, Whiteside also publicly opposed the multifunction polis, describing the proposal as being about ‘Japanese financial control of this country’<sup>121</sup>. Two years later, despite earlier opposing the teaching of Japanese language in Australia, he opposed a suggestion by tour companies to bring in Japanese tour guides to compensate for poor domestic Japanese language skills<sup>122</sup>. He proposed yet another public meeting to discuss the issue but was publicly embarrassed when his keynote speaker, Greg Lund of the Australia Japan Business Group, refused to be associated with Heart of a Nation and pulled out<sup>123</sup>. In the end, attendance at the meeting amounted to thirty people and Whiteside castigated the public for their apathy in not caring about ‘the country’s future’<sup>124</sup>.

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<sup>114</sup> Greg Roberts, ‘An embittered old warhorse sharpens his political knife for some scalping’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 15 August 1988, p 13

<sup>115</sup> Rod McGuirk, ‘Hawke a crawler, says Whiteside’, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 13 January 1989, p 5; and ‘Whiteside is attacked on anti-Japanese funds stance’, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 14 January 1989, p 16

<sup>116</sup> McGuirk, ‘Hawke’, p 5

<sup>117</sup> ‘Whiteside slams neglect by MPs’, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 13 February 1989, p 15

<sup>118</sup> Brett Free and Stephen Hunt, ‘Whiteside refuses to let teacher into hall’, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 8 February 1989, p 3

<sup>119</sup> Whiteside commented, ‘We are leaving our future in the hands of politicians whose business is preserving their political status and income. ... Money is the sledgehammer Japanese investors are wielding and the little people at the bottom of the scale in Australia are getting hurt’: ‘Whiteside slams neglect’, p 15

<sup>120</sup> Free and Hunt, loc. cit. Brooks described Heart of a Nation as ‘a perpetual motion grievance machine, powered by rumour and innuendo’ and commented that the new meeting was a ‘return to the original scene of the crime at the Miami Great Hall’ and an Orwellian ‘two-minute-hate’ session ‘going overtime’. ‘Sundry commentators’, he said, had ‘attempted to persuade Mr Whiteside that the earth is not flat, that the sun does not go around the earth, that Godzilla is not really a large reptile living in Tokyo’ but with ‘no avail’: Charles R Brooks, ‘Return to the scene of the crime’, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 6 February 1989, p 8

<sup>121</sup> Bruce Whiteside, Letter, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 31 January 1990, p 10

<sup>122</sup> Nick Dalton, ‘Lack of skills costs guide jobs’, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 4 June 1992, pp 1-2

<sup>123</sup> Lund declared that he would ‘have the greatest difficulty addressing a meeting convened under the banner of the Heart of a Nation organisation’, as the Australia Japan Business Group stood for ‘more, not less,

Regardless of its relatively short active lifespan<sup>125</sup>, the Heart of a Nation movement remains a significant example of organised action against Japanese investment in Australia. With the aid of the media, Whiteside and his adherents helped Queensland gain the reputation of a state where Japanese were unwelcome. In Japan, as the *Yomiuri Shimbun* reported, the impression created by the agitation on the Gold Coast was of a nation at war with Japan<sup>126</sup>. By far the most enduring impact of the movement, however, was the encouragement it gave, not only to the usual suspects on the political far right but also to 'ordinary' Australians, to disseminate a multitude of negative images of Japan and the Japanese. Along with racialised images of Japan as a 'yellow peril' and as an implacable enemy unchanged since World War II, Australians could now envision the Japanese as wealthy and self-indulgent investors, insensitive to the feelings of Australians regarding their purchases, gleeful about the extent of their 'invasion' and, just perhaps, plotting their next course of action against an unsuspecting and vulnerable Australia.

While the impact of this addition to Australia's lexicon of negative images of Japan and the Japanese is difficult to assess, it can be considered to have laid some ground in Australia for the hardening of public attitudes towards Japan and, indeed, the strengthening of the opposition to what was perceived to be the unchecked 'Asianisation' of Australia in the 1990s. For Bruce Whiteside, the failure of Heart of a Nation to attract widespread public support must have been disappointing but it did not appear to dampen his desire to convert his controversial views into a mainstream political action. By the 1992 Queensland state election, Whiteside was standing as an endorsed candidate of the Confederate Action Party, a party on the far right of the political spectrum which shared many of the aims of the Citizens' Electoral Councils to which Heart of a Nation had been linked<sup>127</sup>. Again, he

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foreign investment, including from Japan'. He concluded that Whiteside had attempted to 'use him to push a line of thought with which he wanted no part': 'Key speaker pulls out of anti-Japanese rally', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 5 June 1992, p 3

<sup>124</sup> 'Small rally crowd for Whiteside', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 12 June 1992, p 2

<sup>125</sup> Heart of a Nation was technically in existence until 1996, when it was deregistered by the Office of Fair Trading for long-term failure to comply with the regulations of an incorporated association: Queensland Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading, Office of Fair Trading, record IA04699.

<sup>126</sup> A Japanese reporter who had been present at the Miami meeting told *Yomiuri Shimbun* readers that 'I was seized by the illusion that I was attending an anti-Japanese rally in a country at war with Japan'. See the English translation of his article: 'Australia like "nation at war"', p 4

<sup>127</sup> Markus, op. cit., pp 130-31. For a description of the rise and fall of the Confederate Action Party see, for example, Jim Saleam, 'The other radicalism: An inquiry into contemporary Australian extreme right ideology,

failed to secure significant electoral support. At this time Whiteside appeared to resign himself to a role of supporting other more charismatic politicians with similar views to his own regarding the nexus between Australia and Asia, rather than seeking direct election. In October 1996, he founded the Pauline Hanson Support Movement, an incorporated association offering populist support to Hanson, then a newly elected Independent member for the federal seat of Oxley in Queensland with controversial views on 'Asianisation'. There was 'little wonder', he wrote later, 'that I admired the woman who had thrown the gauntlet down to a house full of political wimps'<sup>128</sup>. Whiteside again rather naively intended his movement to be non-political but his tendency to speak out publicly on the issue of Hanson and her views meant that he soon tangled with several of Hanson's political offshoots, who considered Whiteside to be erratic, volatile and a political liability. In what must have been an even more galling experience than witnessing Heart of a Nation die from lack of public support, Whiteside was eventually ousted as convenor and then resigned as a member of the Pauline Hanson Support Movement<sup>129</sup>.

## Conclusion

The eventual collapse of public support for Pauline Hanson and her One Nation party at the *fin-de-siècle* of the twentieth century, too, shows the temperamental nature of populist politics almost entirely based on racial paranoia<sup>130</sup>. The furore over the levels of

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politics and organization 1975-1995', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1999, <http://www.alphalink.com.au/~radnat/otherradicalism/index.html>, accessed 16 December 2002

<sup>128</sup> Whiteside reminisces bitterly about the lack of support that Heart of a Nation received, as well as his involvement with Pauline Hanson and One Nation in an unfinished online book: Whiteside, *Destiny aborted: How they eliminated the people's politician*, accessed 3 February 2004. See chapter 2, entitled 'movement, not rhetoric ...', for discussion of Heart of a Nation.

<sup>129</sup> Bruce Whiteside, 'Resignation letter from the Pauline Hanson support movement', 8 April 1997, <http://www.gwb.com.au/2000/white/resign.htm>, accessed 5 February 2003. Ironically, the nature of the Pauline Hanson Support Movement, established by Whiteside as a supporter's group, was an instrumental factor in the conviction of Pauline Hanson and David Ettridge for fraudulently registering their One Nation political party in August 2003: Kevin Meade, 'Hanson jailed for three years', *Australian*, 21 August 2003, p 1. The conviction was later overturned on appeal, giving Hanson in particular a sudden increase in attention and community support. In the midst of the Queensland state election in early 2004, for example, Hanson led a street march in Brisbane against 'injustices in the legal system': 'Hanson's legal rally - Queensland decides', *Australian*, 2 February 2004, p 4

<sup>130</sup> It has been argued that mainstream political parties, somewhat more cleverly than Hanson, have reshaped and harnessed Australia's racial paranoia: Robert Manne, ed. *The Howard years*, Melbourne: Black Inc, 2004

Japanese investment gradually died down in Queensland, as it did in other states. The much-vaunted multifunction polis, too, was eventually whittled down from its grandiose plan for a new Japanese-Australian high-technology city to a mere shade of its original self. Yet, regardless of how short-lived the movements based on this type of politics are, the attitudes they engender and promote through their activities can linger on<sup>131</sup>. As the re-emergence of 'yellow peril' era and World War II images of Japan during the Heart of a Nation phase proved, negative images of Japan and the Japanese in Australia have been enduring. They lie only just beneath the surface of more positive and, indeed, more rewarding legacy of Australian imagery on Japan; a legacy of successful intercultural relationships between Australians and Japanese. Even as the issue of Japanese investment regularly dominated the headlines of the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, for example, the paper promoted Miss Australia's appearance at the Japanese-owned ANA Gold Coast hotel<sup>132</sup>, Japanese actor Goro Namerikawa's visiting production at the Brisbane Lyric Theatre<sup>133</sup> and the visit of a high-level delegation from Kanagawa Prefecture to 'strengthen business, friendship and cultural ties' with the Gold Coast<sup>134</sup>. However, if Australians again feel threatened by the proximity or power of Japan in its relations with Australia, more negative images will undoubtedly re-emerge to dominate perceptions of Japan.

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<sup>131</sup> As Pulitzer prize-winning historian John Dower has noted, images can be 'free-floating', which enables them to reappear in response to the 'exigencies and apprehensions of the moment': John W Dower, *War without mercy: Race & power in the pacific war*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1986, p 309

<sup>132</sup> 'Sweets for the sweet', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 3 May 1988, p 7

<sup>133</sup> Anne Livingston, 'Star performer!' *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 27 May 1988, p 1. With apparently no sense of irony, this article shared the front-page with a story headlined as 'Japanese land grab shock: 70 per cent of Coast's future prime resort land controlled from Tokyo': Whittaker and McGuirk, loc. cit.

<sup>134</sup> Nick Dalton, 'Japanese build on sister city link', *Gold Coast Bulletin*, 17 October 1990, p 6