

### **John Minto (Anti-Tour Perspective)**

John Minto was anti-tour because he believed that playing against South Africa would show that New Zealand supports the racial segregation of apartheid in South Africa.

Minto's perspective was shaped by his experiences because he was a part of the younger generation, who were more likely to be pro tour. Minto was in his 20s when he became the leader of the anti-tour group, known as, HART (Halt All Racist Tours). HART was established in 1969 to protest and stop the tours. According to historian Jock Phillips, the younger generation who were made up of university students were more likely to be anti-tour. The younger generation grew up during a period of social activism in the 1970s and the 1980s. This included protests for Māori culture (1972 Language Petition and the 1975 Māori Land March). It also included the Occupation at Bastion Point in 1977-78. New Zealand was a bicultural country, and the younger generation were focussed on protesting for the rights of the indigenous communities. Minority and indigenous groups took part in the 1981 Springbok Tour. The Polynesian Panthers, including members such as Tigilau Ness and Will 'Ilohahia, were both arrested because of their participation in the protests. It took the presence and testimony of Bishop Desmond Tutu to get 'Ilohahia freed without being charged. Additionally, Nga Tamatoa was also involved with the 1981 Springbok Tour with many being a part of the Patu Squad. The social activism of the younger generation, including Minto, can be seen in this quote, *"You would walk down Queen Street on a Saturday night and ask the person next to you what we were protesting about tonight – there was always something to picket"*. Therefore, when the 1981 Springbok Tour happened the younger generation, including Minto, felt they had to stand up against the racist system of apartheid which did not accept coloured or black people.

John Minto's perspective was influenced by his view of apartheid, that it was a racist and violent system. Apartheid separated people based on their colour and favoured white people over others. Races had their separate facilities and inter-racial marriages was not permitted. Several incidents happened in South Africa, because of the system of apartheid, that led to the deaths of many blacks. For example, the Sharpeville Massacre in 1978. Another violent incident that Minto also knew of was the death of Steve Biko while in police custody. Biko's death made international headlines. The anti-tour protestors often held masks with the face of Biko on it as a reminder of the violence and apartheid system in South Africa. Minto's knowledge of these events impacted his perspective.

The most significant action of Minto as chairman and organiser for the Halt All Racist Tours (HART) protest group was the protest organised by Minto to oppose the Waikato vs Springbok match on Saturday the 25th of July 1981 alongside 2000 others in protest. Due to the escalation of the protest causing physical violence between riot police and the anti-tour protesters, the Waikato vs Springbok tour game was cancelled leaving the protesters victorious. The protest went to the extent of protestors surging forward and ripping down the perimeter fence along the field grounds as well as pushing through game spectators to form a human chain on the pitch as a way to repel the police. Minto describes the scale of the protest to be *"the closest New Zealand has got to civil war."*, this is about the violent interchanges between the anti-tour protesters and police.

Minto's reason for taking action was because he believed the anti-tour protestors needed to show support for the South Africans who were suffering under the apartheid regime. Minto said, *"The Springbok Tour represents a clear opportunity for New Zealand to stand against*

*apartheid. We must not let this opportunity slip through our fingers.*” Minto took this as an opportunity to show support for South Africans. According to [sahistory.org](http://sahistory.org) protests resisting the laws of apartheid began in the 1950s and early 60s which according to [nonviolent-conflict.org](http://nonviolent-conflict.org) consisted of strikes or ‘walkouts’, school and sports boycotts, and mass marches. The use of passive resistance protests apartheid was met with militant violence from police enforced by the government. An example of this is the Soweto Uprising on June 16th 1976, a student-led march with an estimation of 3,000-10,000 students in protest against the Bantu Education Act. However, the protesters were met with police releasing tear gas and live ammunition at the thousands of students leaving more a thousand injured and the death of an estimated 176 yet further reports showcasing an estimated 700 deaths. John Minto's display of solidarity is seen in the [stuff.co.nz](http://stuff.co.nz) article as Minto said at the time, “We are here today to prove we care more for the rights of 23 million blacks in Africa than for 80 minutes of rugby,”

Another action made by Minto to show that he was against the Springbok's touring New Zealand was the operation of causing a commotion to disturb the sleep of South African rugby players the morning of their game. On August 8th, 1981, at 5:30 am Minto along with an estimated 30 or more anti-tour protesters rallied outside the Grand Hotel in Invercargill to give the Springboks an alarming wakeup call using whistles and hailers to, as Minto described it, “let them know they were in New Zealand”. In other words, they did this to make it known that things are done differently in New Zealand compared to South Africa where during this time those against apartheid were being faced with militant crackdowns by the ruling government (National Party) leaving thousands dead or imprisoned.

John Minto's motive in his visit to Invercargill was to prevent the Springboks from touring New Zealand by protesting the Springboks vs Southland rugby match on August 8th, 1981. Minto's reason for this action was because the tour was about ensuring that people's human rights, were protected. Minto said, “It's about justice, equality and human rights. We cannot turn a blind eye to the suffering...” This challenged the community norm in Invercargill as reports made in 1981 showed 70% of the people in Invercargill were pro-tour. This was due to many people believing that “the tour was about rugby, and they weren't interested in politics.” By challenging the community's value of rugby Minto was also fulfilling his role as the leader of HART and as an activist as this era was a time of protest in New Zealand.

### **Robert Muldoon (Pro Tour)**

Robert Muldoon was pro-tour and supported New Zealand playing South Africa in 1981. Robert David Muldoon was the elected prime minister of New Zealand from 1975-1984.

Robert Muldoon's perspective was shaped by his own experiences. Robert Muldoon was born in 1921 and was raised in a time of economic uncertainty and war. Muldoon himself was a war veteran, having taken part in World War II, and so were seven members of his government body. According to Jock Philips the pro tour supporters tended to be of the older generation. Robert Muldoon was a part of the older generation that Jock Philips referred to. The older generation also tended to be rugby supporters and saw the sport as being important to New Zealand's identity. One of the defining features and cornerstones of New Zealand's identity, particularly those of Robert Muldoon was the idea that rugby was a part of their culture. The rivalry between New Zealand and South Africa could be traced back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and this had become a part of being a New Zealander. Muldoon was a part of a generation of New Zealanders, along with a lot of the pro tour supporters, who had been involved with World War II. Armed conflict was seen as being a part of a man's identity. Rugby was a key part of a man's identity in New Zealand while Muldoon was growing up and in the 1980s. Physical strength, seen in rugby games, encapsulated a lot of what was seen as masculine at the time. Muldoon, along with 7 members of his cabinet, were war veterans and this would have shaped his perspective. The war veterans saw the anti-tour protestors, such as Minto, as a threat to

the order and unity of the country. This is the context in which Robert Muldoon grew up in and would ultimately influence his own perspective on the 1981 Springbok Tour. This would go onto clash with the perspective of the younger generation, including those of Minto, who were growing up post-World War II and a lot more socially active in their protests and challenges of authority.

Muldoon's perspective was also shaped by his role as the leader of the National Party. Robert Muldoon ran for Prime Minister in 1975. One of the issues that Muldoon campaigned on was that he promised his voters he would not cancel the Springbok Tour between New Zealand and South Africa. Muldoon needed the support of those living in rural towns, often rugby supporters, to get into power in 1975. To maintain their support and ensure that he would win, Muldoon needed to make sure that he allowed the Springbok Tour to continue. This political campaign promise, that he would not cancel the Tour like Prime Minister Norman Kirk did in 1973, is one that influenced and shaped Muldoon's perspective and ultimately his actions during the 1981 Springbok Tour. When Muldoon got into power in 1975, he allowed the 1976 Springbok Tour to go ahead. The Soweto Riots took place in the same year. As a result of these 20 African countries boycotted the Montreal Olympics in response to New Zealand continued sporting contact with South Africa. Muldoon's role as a leader and drive to be the Prime Minister also shaped his perspective and support of the 1981 Springbok Tour. Muldoon's refusal to cancel the 1981 Springbok Tour himself and ultimately giving it to the New Zealand Rugby Football Federation (in charge of rugby) to make the final call shows that he was a politician, refusing to lose voters. Muldoon said on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1981 (just less than two weeks before the tour) that, "...The issue now rests with the New Zealand Rugby Union. I say to them, think well before you make this decision." In this way, Muldoon was refusing to completely shut down the tour and being able to step away. Then he could say that it is not his decision for the tour to continue, it is the rugby board. This is what he promoted and would therefore allow him to maintain his supporters. Ultimately, being able to be voted back in for a second term as Prime Minister of New Zealand.

The most significant action of Muldoon was his first and final direct appeal to the NZRFU (New Zealand Rugby Football Union) on July 6, 1981, and was televised live across the nation. This was before the NZFU were indirectly given the green light to invite the Springboks to New Zealand. The entire nation was eagerly tuned, the majority tuning in to hear Muldoon's speech as months prior multiple anti-tour protests that brought an estimated of 65,000 people to the streets of urban cities in New Zealand had occurred. It is said that many New Zealand citizens against the tour were hoping for a change of heart from Muldoon and the government to abolish the tour. However, they underestimated Muldoon's strong belief on the issue of sport and politics and the National Party's importance in securing votes for the general election in 1981 which would be achieved through feeding into New Zealand's rugby super fans as rugby had become a huge part of New Zealand's identity originating in the 1950s. An indirect comment made by Muldoon according to [nzgeo.com](http://nzgeo.com) during his speech was "I say to them [the NZRFU], think well before you make a decision." Muldoon took this action because he believed in the idea of 'bridge building'. This would build a bridge or a connection and show South Africa our system of having a multi racial team (All Blacks). There were also other supporters of Muldoon's idea of bridge building, including those who were his pro tour supporters. Muldoon's idea of bridge building enabled the tour to continue and would keep his supporters on his side. A survey done in 1981 showed that 41% of New Zealanders supported the tour and this would have been a lot of Muldoon's supporters who had voted for him to be Prime Minister in 1975. Robert Muldoon's action of not cancelling the tour but allowing the NZRFU was effective. It allowed him to shift the blame or make it seem like it was up to the rugby union to make the decision and if they did not cancel it, he could not be blamed for it. Muldoon's refusal to cancel the tour himself meant that he did win the 1981 election by a small margin, which would have been in part due to the rural support that he had. If Muldoon had

cancelled the tour he would have lost his supporters in rural areas, who were by and large pro tour supporters.

In August 1981, at the height of the 1981 Springbok Tour, Robert Muldoon released a list of 15 'radicals' and 'subversives'. This was a list put together by Secret Intelligence (SI). The Secret Intelligence Service was a group created because of the Official Secrets Acts in 1951. The act was a result of the worries that people had about communism, there were a lot of trials happening around this in the United States and Britain. Muldoon had sent a request to SI to investigate the anti-tour movement. The report found that the Citizens Opposed to the Springbok Tour (COST, an anti-tour group) was 'greatly influenced' by the Worker's Communist League. SI saw the Worker's Communist League as subversive. In other words, they were oppositional and went against the state. Within its historical context, this would have been a major accusation against the anti-tour group. Muldoon faced a lot of backlashes from anti tour protestors; however, he was not sorry about the release of the list. Muldoon would have viewed the anti-tour protestors as causing division and therefore being problematic to the state. This would have caused further division and fuelled anger from the pro tour supporters against those who were anti tour. Muldoon shifted the focus of the tour, for a moment, onto those mentioned in the list and he could distract New Zealanders from the chaos of the tour. Muldoon played on the fear of New Zealanders and those who against communism by accusing the anti-tour protestors (represented by COST) as communists or being 'influenced' by communism. To be accused of being 'subversive' and 'radical' was seen as a big deal in the context of the 1981 Springbok Tour and it would have also created further division between the anti-tour protestors and Muldoon.