

# ALL BLACKS MAORI ISSUE

SIGN THE

# PROTEST

Despite protests, the controversial rugby tour went ahead. The issue of sporting ties with South Africa would eventually split the country in 1981 (see 12 September).

The All Blacks first toured South Africa, with its entrenched racial segregation, in 1928. Although Māori had always been eligible to represent New Zealand, the New Zealand Rugby Football Union chose not to select them to play in South Africa. In 1928 this meant leaving behind players like the legendary George Nēpia. No players identifiable as Māori would tour South Africa until 1970, and even then, they did so as 'honorary whites'.

In 1960 nearly 160,000 people signed a petition opposing that year's tour by an 'all white All Blacks' team. Groups like the Citizens' All Black Tour Association campaigned with the slogan, 'No Maoris – No Tour'. Others argued that politics had no place in sport. In the end, Wilson Whineray's team left as planned, their aircraft narrowly missing demonstrators who were sprinting across the runway at Whenuapai airport.

The All Blacks lost the series 2–1, with one test drawn.

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