

Schenectady Gazette

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Rugby Vote Delayed

By STEVE NELSON
Gazette Reporter

ALBANY — A resolution urging Mayor Erastus Corning II to halt a September 22 appearance at Bleecker Stadium by a South African rugby club was sent to committee last night by the Common Council.

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An overflow crowd of 100 persons booed lustily when the council voted 11 to 3 to delay action on the controversial resolution. Council President James Giblin ordered the chairman of the committee, Philip DiPace, to report back on the issue in time for a vote at the council's September meeting.

Clara Satterfield, president of the Albany chapter of the NAACP, said she was disappointed with the decision. Mrs. Satterfield presented Giblin with petitions bearing more than 1,000 signatures of persons living in the Capital District opposed to the match.

The delay came despite efforts by Ward 7 alderman Nancy Burton and the resolution's sponsor, Ward 5 alderman Nebraska Brace, to bring the issue up for a vote.

"I think this body is about ready to take a very cowardly action," fumed Burton just before alderman Stephen McArdie took the floor to read the issue

into committee. Burton's comment drew fire from Giblin, who declared that during his 20-year tenure, "This council has always acted responsibly."

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Members of the crowd shouted "racist" as the aldermen gave their explanations. At one point the crowd drowned out the roll call. Order was restored after Giblin cracked the gavel several times.

"There isn't an alderman in this room that has a touch of racism," Giblin declared.

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Council stalls game vote

By Nancy Connell

Staff Writer
And Wire Reports

While more than 70 angry onlookers filled the chambers with hoots and hisses, the Albany Common Council sidestepped the controversial rugby issue Monday, deferring action until less than two weeks before a South African team is due to play in Blecker Stadium.

By a vote of 10 to 3, the council sent to committee a resolution calling on Mayor Erastus Corning II to cancel the permit allowing the team, the Springboks, to play in the city-owned stadium Sept. 22.

Only Aldermen Nancy Burton and Thomas Burch joined the sponsor of the resolution, Nebraska Brace, in appeal-

ing the decision by the chair to delay action on the measure. Aldermen Marvin Tanksley and William Wieden were absent.

The council's action, or lack of it, is in line with the position held by Corning, who continued Monday to hold to his wait-and-see attitude about allowing the team to play in Blecker Stadium.

"It's extremely difficult to know what should be done; there's a lot of gray area here," Corning said. "I still have a month or so to make a decision, though I might decide by the end of the week. It's all a very bothersome thing to me."

About 50 demonstrators gathered outside city hall before the council

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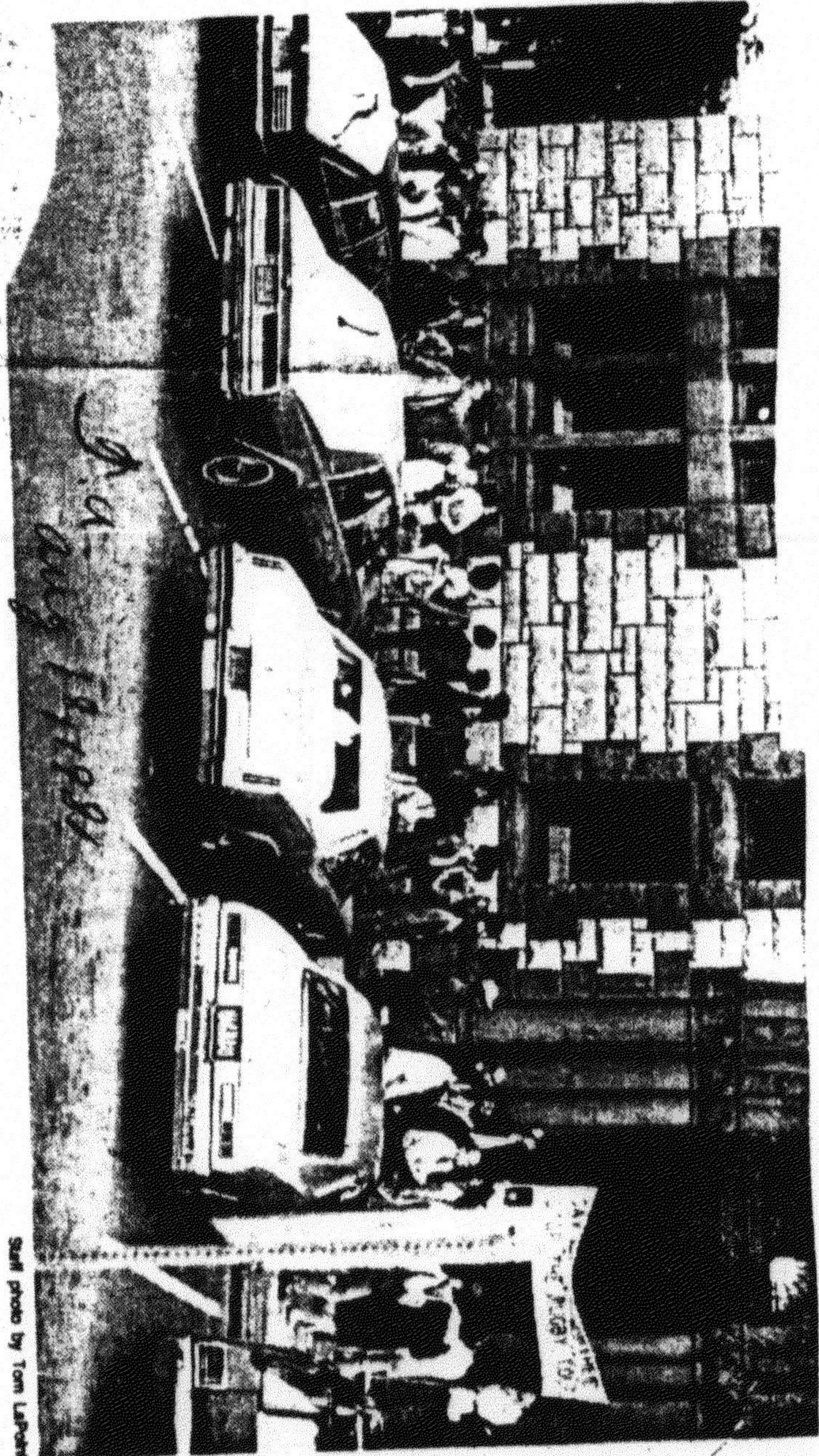


MAYOR CORNING

...to decide on game

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Staff photo by Tom Laporte

PEACEFUL PROTEST — About 50 marchers gather in front of Albany City Hall Monday evening to show their opposition to

plans by the South African rugby team, the Springboks, to play a local team in Bleecker Stadium next month.

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30t Council stalls vote on local rugby match

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meeting to chant, "One, two, three, four; stop the rugby tour."

After about a half hour of orderly marching, the protestors moved inside for the council meeting, where they greeted the council's actions with a chorus of hisses and boos while the organizer of the group, Michael Dollard, struggled to restore order.

Brace, who represents the predominantly black Arbor Hill section of the city, introduced a resolution citing the opposition of at least eight area groups to the proposed game.

"We urge the mayor to forbid the use of Bleecker Stadium for the ... rugby match and let this body also go on record as supporting a decision by the mayor to cancel the use of Bleecker Stadium for the said event," the resolution read. "Out of human decency let this body say once and for all, no to apartheid, no to racism, and no to the usage of our municipal facility."

As soon as Brace introduced the measure, Burton rose to warn of the impending move to delay action on the legislation by referring it to the council's law committee.

"I think this body is about to take a very cowardly action," Burton said. "Mr. (Stephen) McArdle is about ready to send this resolution to committee."

Her words drew an angry response from common council President James Giblin.

"Is that your feeling toward your fellow councilmen?" Giblin asked.

"I think it's a cowardly act on their part," Burton replied.

After that encounter, McArdle rose to move the resolution to committee, saying, "I believe more time is needed to study this very controversial issue."

McArdle's action left Brace with only one option — to try and get his fellow aldermen to overrule the chair and put the resolution to a vote. The attempt failed, however, with the 10 to 3 vote.

Burch, who normally votes with the council majority, said, "I just thought it could have been taken care of this evening."

Burch went on to say that he would have voted for Brace's resolution, although he felt it should have been amended to delete the portion which he said implied the mayor would indeed cancel the permit.

Giblin said that the law committee, chaired by Alderman Philip DiPace, would report back to the council about the resolution by the

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next council meeting, Sept. 10.

Meanwhile, Albany YWCA president Elizabeth Hemstead Monday announced the YWCA's opposition to the game, stating, "We have heard, first hand and movingly from our black sisters in South Africa, of that country's systematic injustices to blacks."

Capital District groups opposed to the team's visit prepared to meet Wednesday in Albany with Boji Jordan, a former leader of South Africa's banned Pan-African Congress to try to block the team's visit.

A world tour by the 30-man squad has turned into a cause celebre for groups opposed to South African apartheid, the laws which call for the segregation of the non-white majority of that country. A game featuring the Springboks sparked a civil disturbance in New Zealand last weekend.

In this country, the Eastern Rugby Union had lined up three dates for the Springboks to play — on Sept. 19 in Chicago; Sept. 22 in Albany and Sept. 26 in New York City. Now, because of opposition from a wide range of civil rights groups, it appears both the Chicago and New York City matches, if played at all, will be staged in secret.

Only the Albany match remains firmly on the schedule.

Groups such as the Capital District Committee Against Apartheid and the Albany NAACP have labeled the game a propaganda move by the South African government to soften opposition to apartheid.

But Corning said he does not believe Springboks are a national team. "There seems to be a great deal of effort to tie the team in as a national team. It is not."

Corning was on vacation last week when anti-apartheid groups staged a press conference and a demonstration outside city hall urging the mayor to reverse his decision to let the team play at Blecker Stadium.

The mayor, who has said he might consider reversing his stand if there were sufficient opposition, said he received 12 letters last week about the rugby game, four in favor and eight against.

"Two-thirds of the letters I've gotten say I should prohibit the team from playing in the city of Albany," he said. "But there are also issues to consider like freedom of speech and freedom of assembly."

Corning has said that while he is opposed to apartheid, he feels that he cannot prevent the team from playing in the city.

"For the United States government to in effect say the tour should be held when it

granted the team their visas (on July 13) — that was a clear and specific statement," Corning said Monday. "For the little city of Albany to then say 'You cannot use a public facility . . . That raises a very serious question in my mind.'"

New York City Mayor Edward Koch had followed a line of reasoning similar to Corning's about the team's scheduled game in New York City until last week. Then, under mounting opposition, he withdrew the city permit for the team to play in municipally owned Downing Stadium.

Organizers said the game will be held in New York, however, in a private location. If Albany withdraws its permission, another site has been found in this area also, the organizers say.

One of the candidates opposing Corning in this fall's mayoral election, Fred Dusenbury, has announced opposition to the use of the stadium.

Corning said that if the team plays in Blecker, it will be up to the organizers to provide security inside the facility, but that the city will provide the police protection outside.

"If there is a demonstration, it will be handled by city police," Corning said.

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Roster of players lines

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The team, the Springbok, was on a world tour. Next stop: Chicago. But Chicago said no, thanks.

Final stop: New York City. But after public opposition became loud, Mayor Edward I. Koch — saying the game between the South African team and a local team might cause riots — withdrew permission for the Springboks to use city facilities.

Middle stop: Albany.

And now, with the game scheduled for Sept. 22, Albany has become the focal point for a national demonstration, organized out of New York, against apartheid, the official racial segregation policy of South Africa. Besides the mayor, the bishops, the rabbis, the ministers, the YWCA, the politicians and the rugby players themselves, the principals in this drama could not be more different.

Tom Selfridge is head of the Eastern Rugby Union, a union of rugby teams in this area and New England. Selfridge's group is sponsoring the South African team's tour in the east.

Tom Selfridge of Schenectady had an agenda in mind when he took over the Eastern Rugby Union last December.

He wanted to add a new dimension to rugby — taking the rough and tumble game played among local enthusiasts and making it also the organized sport that would fill sports stadiums in America as it does in other countries.

But as president of the rugby union, Selfridge has seen an entirely different kind of recognition for the sport. By inviting the South African Springbok team to play in the United States, the Eastern Rugby Union has thrust the game, Selfridge himself and the entire Albany area into the spotlight at the center of an international dispute about human rights.

This is Selfridge's explanation of how it all came about.

Selfridge, tall, trim, blonde and well-spoken, at age 34 is the very image of the fit and sinewy rugby player. His brother, Andy Selfridge, was a football-player with the New York Giants and Tom Selfridge played football himself during high school and college.

Then, after graduation, he took on rugby as his sport. As he says himself, Tom Selfridge is not one to do things by half-measures. As a player, he competed on the all-star team picked from

up for last act in growing rugby drama

Boji Jordan, an exiled South African, called the team 'ambassadors of apartheid.'

among the best players in the United States from 1976 to 1980. Last December he became president of the Eastern Rugby Union, the group which organizes the sport for 350 clubs representing 23 states in the eastern U.S.

While touring with the national all-stars in 1978 and with the eastern union team in 1976, Selfridge had played in South Africa. And he had met Louis Luyt, the South African businessman who has contributed more than \$2 million to South African rugby.

"I had toured in South Africa with the U.S. national team in 1978. I met him then and he remembered my name. He came to the United States to start a company, and he contacted me to be in New York, and so we got together," Selfridge said.

The result was a \$25,000 gift, in December, to Eastern Rugby Union. The union has a total budget of \$32,000, excluding the gift, for 1981.

It is a contribution which opponents of the rugby tour say follows the pattern of Luyt's activities as an agent for the South African government, dispensing sports money for its propaganda value.

Selfridge, however, says that the money is the donation of a private individual, to be used for improving the quality of the local clubs.

The same month, December, Selfridge extended an invitation to the South African team to play the eastern union. The games were to be scheduled to follow the South African tour of 22 games in New Zealand, with the South Africans returning home by way of the United States, Selfridge said.

"The Springboks indicated they would enjoy playing, but they wanted more than one match," Selfridge said. "The U.S. executive committee then voted to play (the South Africans), and also the Midwestern Rugby Union extended an invitation."

A U.S. tour was set up with the first stop in Chicago, for a game with the Midwestern Rugby Union Sept. 19, a second stop in Albany for a game with the Colonials, the all-stars from the Eastern Rugby Union, Sept. 22 and a final game in New York City Sept. 26 with the Eagles, the all-stars from the entire country.

"The eastern union, because of our strength, would be considered in a position to play teams in that category," Selfridge said.

Selfridge said the union looked at 10 sites, including such major cities as Boston, Washington, D.C., Baltimore and Philadelphia before picking Albany for the Colonials game.

"Albany is a major rugby city," fridge said.

"I'm here and I'm willing to organize it," he added to explain the choice.

According to Selfridge and individual rugby players, the sport in this country now consists largely of pick-up games between local teams. A number of players compared the degree of organization to that found among company softball teams who dig up opponents for a season of play.

There are four rugby unions for the United States, with the largest being the eastern union, made up of 350 clubs distributed among 12 subunions in 23 states. Playoffs between the subunions are held to determine the players for the Colonials, the eastern union all-star team. National players are picked from the best players in the four unions.

As union president, Selfridge implemented ambitious new plans for the union. Dues for the clubs were increased from \$15 to \$30 a year, increasing the total budget from \$5,000 to \$26,000, with a projected increase to \$40,000 in 1982.

"We're totally restructuring this ... to a comparable level to the National Football League," Selfridge said. "I'm trying to model it after American sports I know."

"We want to compete in international competition. You do that by bringing in first class teams like the Springboks. From a sports standpoint, our motivation is this. If we can get them (the Springboks) to Albany and beat 'em, that helps with our program," Selfridge said.

And then there is Richard Lapchick, who is the moving force behind the opposition to the tour.

When Richard Lapchick was a child growing up in Queens, he remembers picking up the upstairs telephone to hear a voice calling his father "nigger lover."

Rather than scaring him off, the experience fired Lapchick's own commitment to social justice over the years. As a graduate student, he studied South Africa's apartheid policies of racial oppression. Later, he became national director of the American Coordinating Committee for Equality in Sports, directed against racial discrimination in sports.

Now Lapchick has turned his attention to Albany. As a co-founder of a New York City-based group called Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour, Lapchick is one of those planning to stage a national demonstration in Albany if the South African team plays the Eastern Rugby Union all-star team in Bleecker Stadium Sept. 22.

For now, however, he is waiting to see if Corning will withdraw the team's permit to play in the city-owned facility.

In a telephone interview, Lapchick summed up the opposition like this: "This is not a friendly sports contact. This is something much beyond that."

The explanation of that statement has been made from a number of different perspectives and from a number of different sources in recent weeks, as opponents try to get their message across.

Boji Jordan, an exiled South African, called the South African team "ambassadors of apartheid," in a talk last week in the Albany Public Library. The tour is a ploy used by the South Africans to soften opposition to apartheid, the policy of racial oppression, Jordan said.

Lapchick argues further that the tour will drive a wedge between the United States and the African nations who oppose South Africa, at the same time solidifying American relations with the South African regime. The opposition is particularly concerned because the tour is the first such confrontation since Ronald Reagan became President, Lapchick added.

Lapchick said the \$25,000 Luyt contribution to Selfridge's group falls into a pattern of Luyt's previous activities of acting as a conduit for propaganda payments by the South African government.

Local opposition to the tour first

surfaced when Jordan visited Albany early this summer to alert the Pine Hills Calvary United Methodist Church to the tour. Jordan is a member of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, a group of South Africans recognized by the United Nations as representatives of the black majority in South Africa.

Shortly thereafter, apparently without knowing of Jordan's visit, Michael Dollard and a group of area activists formed the Capital District Committee Against Apartheid to oppose the Albany match. An organizational meeting was held in July and plans were made to gather the support of church and civic organizations.

Within a few weeks, however, the

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Today, because of that little game, the mayor of Albany is mulling what he called 'a very difficult question, one that I have spent a lot of time on . . . My own bishop has come out against it.'

MAYOR ERASTUS CORNING II



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capital district group became a chapter of Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour. Claiming the support of more than 100 organizations, the New York City group is helping orchestrate the local opposition. In addition, Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour plans to bring in national representation from groups such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference for a national demonstration if the game is played in Albany.

In Albany Wednesday, Jordan made six appearances to draw attention to the plight of the black South African.

With fierce intensity, he told an Albany audience of the system of

apartheid that separates most South African black men from their families for 11 months. While the men work in the cities, their wives and children are confined to isolated and barren reservations. The men can visit for only one month a year, Jordan recounted, and if a woman visits her husband in the city she can be jailed if she stays more than 36 hours.

Identity cards are used to keep strict control over the black population's movements. The cards, which must be produced under threat of jail, detail every facet of the black citizen's life, including his employer's assessment of how obedient and hard-working he is, Jordan said.

While the dispute about whether the team should play is intense, there is no argument about the existence or operation of the South African system.

"The ERU (Eastern Rugby Union) is firmly and strongly united in deploring the apartheid governmental policies of South Africa," Selfridge wrote in a press release. "They are an abhorrence to us all."

Selfridge went on to state, "We take the position that sports and politics do not mix because, if they do, we cannot decide where to draw the line."

His point of view was not shared by area clergymen, however.

In the most dramatic move yet, the leaders of most of Capitaland's religious groups stated their opposition to the tour Thursday in strongly worded statements which condemned the tour as a propaganda tool of South Africa and called for the full disclosure of who is underwriting the expenses of the tour. The religious leaders also called for a public boycott of the game and, some clergymen said, they would preach against the game from their pulpits today. Selfridge has stated that the tour is being paid for by the rugby organizations, but the statement from church leaders seems to cast doubt on that explanation in light of the disclosures about Luyt's involvement.

In the meantime, Mayor Corning is mulling all of this.

"It's for me a clear-cut picture," he said. "I have to decide what is right and what is wrong."

Mayor sidesteps protests; OKs rugby game site

See editorial, Page 16-A
By SUSAN SCHULMAN
and E.J. McMAHON Jr.

Ketchikan News Reporter

Despite threats of massive demonstrations and growing opposition to the Springboks tour, Mayor Erasmus Corning II today reaffirmed his position and announced he will not withdraw permission for the South African team to use the city's facility when it plays an American rugby team on Sept. 26.

The mayor issued the following statement:

"Our Constitution guarantees an individual the right to publicly espouse an unpopular cause, and the same right to a number of individuals in peaceful assembly. For that reason, it is wrong to prohibit an individual or group from taking part in a public athletic event because of their beliefs or the policies of their government.

"There is a vast difference between a ban or prohibition and a boycott or peaceful demonstration. The permit for the use of Blecker Stadium stays in full effect.

"Individuals are free to act as their conscience dictates, to approve, watch

or ignore the game, boycott it or demonstrate peacefully."

Corning also said the worldwide tour of the South African rugby team has brought far greater awareness and knowledge of apartheid than the total of all previous publicity ever. It has had a powerful effect, crystallizing understanding throughout the world, and consequent outrage at its evils. "I shatter everything about apartheid."

Corning's decision means Albany is the only city on the Springboks American tour allowing the South African team to use its public facilities.

In light of similar protests, games scheduled for New York City and Chicago will be held at private stadiums, whose identities are not being publicly disclosed to reduce the possibility of demonstrations that officials fear may lead to violence.

Corning's decision also almost guarantees Albany will be the site of a national protest staged by the Capital District Committee Against Apartheid and the Pan-Africanist Congress, the South African liberation movement that has claimed credit for the demonstrations that accompanied the Springboks tour of New Zealand last month.

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Editorial

Rugby and reason

The controversy over whether the Springboks, a South African rugby team, should be allowed to play in Albany's Bleecker Stadium next month has shifted, ominously, from one of principle to one of intimidation.

Until Boji Jordan, an exiled South African, addressed an Albany group earlier this week, there were two sides in the issue: Local organizations, such as the Albany chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Christians United in Mission Inc. and the Capital District Board of Rabbis, who oppose the game because of the South African government's policy of racial separation, or apartheid, and Mayor Erastus Corning II, who has previously said that if the game does go on it cannot be construed as an endorsement of the South African government. However, the mayor has promised to weigh the arguments of those opposed to the match and has not yet made a decision on whether the Springboks can play in the city-owned stadium.

Since the mayor's first comments on the matter, there have been several orderly demonstrations and growing ranks of opposition. But — and this is the vital point — both sides have been responsible and restrained.

This week, however, Mr. Jordan, an exiled South African, told a group at the Albany Public Library that his organization, the Pan Africanist Congress, was behind recent disturbances in New Zealand, where the Springboks are now playing, and said the group plans to join in whatever protest might be staged in Albany should the game go on.

If so, this would mean members of the congress would be part of a national protest planned for Albany by the New York City-based "Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour." The organizers of this demonstration say it will be peaceful and will not disrupt the game.

Nevertheless, Mr. Jordan's remarks have added a new and disturbing aspect to the controversy. For now the mayor must weigh not only the local opposition to the match and his judgment on the matter, but also the possibility of an unwieldy demonstration in his home city.

As we have said on this page in recent days, we, too, believe the game should be called off. But our protest, like the protest of those who have rallied peacefully outside city hall, is based on opposition to the principle of apartheid. We are just as opposed to hints of intimidation.

... and new 'rules'

A member of the Albany Knickerbockers rugby team was quoted the other night as saying sports and politics shouldn't mix — a view that is shared by most of those who would allow the Springboks to play here.

But like it or not, a nation's athletes have been used in the past to send political messages, both with good aims and bad.

When the Russians invaded Afghanistan, President Carter showed his opposition by boycotting the Moscow Olympics. Perhaps more than anything else, this boycott welded athletes to a nation's feelings on human rights policies.

This should be kept in mind when one is tempted to say the rugby match does not mean an endorsement of the apartheid. Another way to look at it is to consider what would have happened had the match gone on without notice here. To our way of thinking, a silent acceptance of the South Africans would have indicated that we did not care about racial policies outside our own borders. For a nation so wounded in the past by its own racial differences, not to care would be unthinkable.

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Springboks will face protesters at local match

By Nancy Connell
Staff Writer

Opponents of the proposed South African rugby tour promised Monday to muster busloads of protesters from college campuses and civil rights organizations next month for a national demonstration at Bleecker Stadium.

Their statements followed Mayor Erastus Corning II's decision to allow the team to play in the city-owned facility.

In a prepared statement Monday morning, Corning announced he would stand by his previous agreement to permit a match between the South African Springbok team and an all-star team from the Eastern Rugby Union in the city-owned facility Sept. 22.

The statement in its entirety read:

"The world-wide tour of the South African rugby team has brought far greater awareness and knowledge of apartheid than the total of all previous publicity ever. It has had a powerful effect, crystalizing understanding throughout the world and consequent outrage at its evils. I abhor everything about apartheid.

"Our Constitution guarantees an individual the right to publicly espouse an unpopular cause, and the same right to a number of individuals in peaceful assembly. For that reason, it is wrong to prohibit an individual or group from taking part in a public athletic event because of their beliefs or the policies of their government.

"There is a vast difference between a ban or prohibition and a boycott or peaceful demonstration. The permit for the use of Bleecker Stadium stays in full effect.

"Individuals are free to act as their conscience dictates, approve, watch or



ERASTUS CORNING II
... I abhor apartheid

ignore the game, boycott it or demonstrate and protest peacefully."

Corning's position was immediately attacked by those who feel that the South Africans are using the tour to erode international opposition to apartheid, the South African policy of racial oppression.

Michael Dollard, organizer of the Capital District Committee Against Apartheid, said: "I think his (Corning's) reasoning is specious in the extreme. We're talking about him voluntarily submitting to a publicity drive by the South Africans. We're in no way infringing on the right of South Africans to make their publicity statements in the standard ways. This in no way infringes on their right of freedom of speech."

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Rugby protests slated

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Corning responded to the attacks on his constitutional stand by saying, "That is their opinion."

To the argument that the South Africans consider the tour a major public relations tool to gain international acceptance for apartheid, Corning responded, "I haven't any idea what the South Africans are going to think."

Corning said he took his position after careful consideration. "When I came to the conclusion it was absolutely right, that was that," he said.

Tom Selfridge, president of the Eastern Rugby Union, which invited the South Africans to play, said he was pleased.

"We're very glad we're going to be able to start to work on just getting a rugby game off the ground, and we appreciate the time the mayor spent in looking into this issue," Selfridge said. "We do not feel this in any way signals an acceptance of the South African form of government any more than if we played a Russian team."

Bishop Howard Hubbard of the Albany Roman Catholic Diocese, one of six religious leaders who last week urged Corning to deny the team access to Bleecker Stadium, issued a prepared statement following the mayor's announcement.

"I am disappointed that a public facility will be used to host the South African rugby team," Hubbard stated. "I hope that the residents of the area will show their disagreement with the cruel and inhumane apartheid policy of the South African government by refusing to attend the rugby match. Such a boycott is consistent with the pleas of

the South African bishops and numerous international agencies."

Clara Satterfield, president of the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said of the mayor's statement:

"I was very surprised and disappointed. We'll just have to get together and decide what to do next."

Charles Touhey, independent candidate for mayor, called Corning's decision "unwise."

"The mayor has shown insensitivity to the issue of apartheid," Touhey said.

Fred Dusenbury, candidate for mayor from the Citizens Party, called the decision "a total insult to black people in Albany . . . an outrage. It's going to cost the taxpayers of Albany thousands and thousands of dollars — buses are coming from New York City with protesters. The police are going to have to brush off their riot helmets." Dusenbury called the game "a propaganda ploy" and said "I am currently working with the anti-apartheid group."

He was referring to a group which calls itself the Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour, a New York City-based organization begun after the South African tour was announced. The group has called for a national demonstration in Albany should the game be held.

Richard Lapchick, one of the founders of the group, said Monday, "We think various groups are going to start organizing around the state. We were told that many of the campuses will be back (from vacation) by that time. We will be chartering buses to get as large a contingent as possible."

Lapchick said that Albany was the preferred site for a demonstration

because in the two other stops on the tour, New York City and Chicago, the games will be played in private.

Selfridge, however, said that the New York game pitting the Eagles national all-star team against the Springboks will be played in a public stadium, although the site will not be announced until about a week before the match. The game was set for Downing Stadium in New York City until Mayor Edward Koch revoked a permit for the facility.

Corning himself attested to the national and international interest in the Albany game, noting that *The Times of London* and a South African newspaper had both contacted him Monday for his statement.

Lapchick argued that the rugby tour could spark a boycott of the 1984 Olympics by the African nations, or a move by the Africans to get the games moved from Los Angeles to another location.

"What we have is a very small sports organization in effect destroying the international sports structure in this country," Lapchick said. "I believe it is very much to South Africa's interest to do what it is doing . . . separating the United States and the African nations."

Asked about the effect on the Olympics, Selfridge said, "From a historical perspective, in 1976 there was a boycott in Montreal because the Springboks played in New Zealand."

"The Springboks this year alone have played eight or nine other countries," Selfridge continued. "The United States gymnastics team is in South Africa now."

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Schenectady GAZETTE PHONE 374-4141 August 25, 1981 SC

Only S. Africa Can Cancel Team's Albany Rugby Match

By STEVE NELSON
Gazette Reporter

ALBANY — Only the South African government can cancel the upcoming Springboks rugby match in Albany since Mayor Erastus Corning II decided yesterday the game will go on at Bleecker Stadium as planned.

Corning has been wrestling for more than two weeks with demands to rescind the permit the Eastern Rugby Football Union received to play an all-star match with the South African team Sept. 22 in Bleecker Stadium.

He made his decision to let the permit stand despite mounting opposition and the threat of a massive demonstration by those opposing the match. The opposition, made up of a coalition of local civic, religious and political groups, wants the match banned to protest the South African apartheid system. Apartheid is an institution in South Africa that systematically discriminates against a black population of 21 million.

Corning was reluctant to talk about the thinking behind the decision other than what was expressed in a written statement leased to the press.

"I spent a lot of time on it (the decision)," he said. "Many people whose opinions I respect and admire on both sides of the question were considered."

"I abhor everything about apartheid," said a portion of the mayor's statement. "Our Con-

stitution guarantees an individual the right to publicly espouse an unpopular cause, and the same right to a number of individuals in peaceful assembly."

"For that reason, it is wrong to prohibit an individual or group from taking part in a public athletic event because of their beliefs or the policies of their government."

The statement concluded by pointing out the "vast difference between a ban or prohibition and a boycott or peaceful demonstration." Corning encouraged the residents of the city to act as their consciences dictate by demonstrating against or boycotting the match.

"Some people will argue this is not about freedom of speech or freedom of assembly," Corning said yesterday afternoon. "I happen not to agree."

"It was unexpected," said Michael Dollard of the Capital District Committee Against Apartheid. "I am absolutely appalled by his decision."

A coalition of groups opposed to the match headed by Clara Satterfield, president of the Albany NAACP, will meet at least twice this week to discuss further opposition to the game, Dollard said.

"The war is not over yet. There is still a strong possibility the South African government will withdraw the team from its American tour," he said. The

tour shortened considerably when Chicago and New York City withdrew their consent for matches scheduled there.

Dollard claimed the South African embassy in Washington D. C. is very aware of the growing opposition to the team's visit here.

"We've made absolutely sure the ambassador is getting all the press clippings," he said.

If South Africa does not bring its team home after it has completed its New Zealand tour, Corning will more than likely see the large demonstrations and boycotts he invites, Dollard said.

"Certainly, there will be a major demonstration at the stadium," he said. "Considering the kind of outrage exhibited in the Capital District, I expect at least several hundred people out of the Capital District alone to demonstrate."

The numbers could be even larger. Buses carrying protestors from Buffalo and New York City are expected in the event the match goes on, Dollard said. Demonstrations by Canadians at the South African consulates in Toronto and Montreal are a possibility as well, he said.

Corning and Dollard agree the controversy has served to educate the public about the evils of the South African system.

"It has had a powerful effect crystallizing understanding throughout the world and consequent outrage at its evils," Corning said in his written statement.

"There is no question but that this whole tour thing gives us the opportunity for public education about South Africa," said Dollard. "Our target is apartheid."

Thomas Selfridge, president of the Eastern Rugby Union, said "I'm glad to be able to start working on the rugby game," now that the mayor's decision has been made.

Corning Issues Statement on Rugby Issue

Here is the text of the statement issued by Albany Mayor Erastus Corning II Aug. 24 regarding the planned visit to Albany of the Springbok rugby team of South Africa:

"The worldwide tour of the South African rugby team has brought far greater awareness and knowledge of apartheid than the total of all previous publicity ever. It has had a powerful effect, crystallizing understanding throughout the world and consequent outrage at its evils. I abhor everything about apartheid. Our Constitution guarantees an individual the right to publicly espouse an unpopular cause and the same right to a number of individuals in peaceful assembly. For that reason it is wrong to prohibit an individual or group from taking part in a public athletic event because of their beliefs or the policies of their government. There is a vast difference between a ban or prohibition and a boycott or peaceful demonstration.

"The permit for the use of Bleecker Stadium stays in full effect. Individuals are free to act as their consciences dictates — approve, watch or ignore the game, boycott it, demonstrate and protest peacefully."

Schenectady Gazette
8/25/81

Council Call to Ban Rugby Game Unlikely

ALBANY — A resolution before the Common Council urging Mayor Erastus Corning II to withdraw his support of the Springboks rugby match in Bleecker Stadium is apparently dead, according to Ward 13 alderman Philip DiPace, chairman of the council's law committee.

DiPace, who said he is the chairman and sole member of the committee, was given the resolution introduced by Ward 5 alderman Nebraska Brace after it was introduced to the council at its last meeting. He will report back to the full council on the resolution at the Sept. 10 meeting.

Over the objections of Brace, Ward 7 alderman Nancy Burton and Ward 11 representative Thomas Burch, the council voted to move the resolution into committee for further study.

Brace, backed by more than 100 persons opposed to the match, pleaded with the council to take swift action on the resolution. Burton said the decision to move the resolution into committee was a "cowardly act."

Burton said last night she was very unhappy about the decision.

She added she could understand the mayor's reasoning but added it was not suggested the team not play, just not play in a

public facility.

"I really feel very strongly about it. I wouldn't feel right if I didn't speak out."

Brace could not be reached for comment.

Both are engaged in primary races for reelection to the council.

DiPace said he discussed the matter with Corning yesterday morning.

"I'm in 99 percent agreement with the mayor. I first thought it (the match) would be in a private park or something," said DiPace.

He said most of the people in his ward thought "politics should not be involved with sports." He agrees, DiPace said.

His only other consideration in the matter was the public's safety on Sept. 22, the day of the match.

But the mayor assured him security would be sufficient.

Corning said yesterday he had not yet discussed security with Police Chief Thomas Burke.

"I'll discuss that with Chief Burke a few days before the match," Corning said.

Sal Garufi, the city's director of parks, said it is up to the organization sponsoring an event at Bleecker stadium to meet with the police department and determine how much security is necessary. The group leasing the stadium assumes the security costs, Garufi said.

That was news to Thomas Selfridge, president of the Eastern Rugby Union. He said he knew nothing of any obligation the rugby organization may have to pay security costs. But, he said, "I have no way of disputing what he (Garufi) said," and that he will be in touch with the police department to discuss security problems.

Albany Knickerbocker News
8/29/81

Call off the match

To the editor:

The Young Womens Christian Association of Albany opposes the use of Bleecker Stadium or any Albany facility for the proposed rugby match between the south African Springboks and the Eastern Rugby Union.

The YWCA is a worldwide movement. We have heard, firsthand and movingly from our black sisters in South Africa, of that country's systematic injustices to blacks.

In our own country, the YWCA has adopted as its one imperative, "To thrust our collective power towards the elimination of racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary." We therefore urge the mayor, the common council and the people of Albany to call off the rugby match.

ELIZABETH HEMSTEAD
President
Albany YWCA

Knickerbocker News
8/28/81

In Albany—

Blacks Condemn Rugby Team Visit

By STEVE NELSON
Gazette Reporter

ALBANY — A Sept. 22 visit here by the South African rugby team is a slap in the face to the city's black community that the Common Council and the city must not tolerate or support, black leaders said last night.

* * *
"The blacks in Arbor Hill are saying 'hell, no' to apartheid and 'hell, no' to the South African rugby team," said Fifth Ward alderman Nebraska Brace as he introduced the small group on hand to seek council's backing. "This is a slap in the face to 26 million blacks in the nation and the 14,000 blacks in this area."

The rugby team from South Africa, a country whose laws embrace rigid race separation and discrimination policies, has been granted visas by the State Department to tour the United States playing rugby. One of the team's planned stops is Albany, where they will play a match in Bleecker Stadium against a local team.

Recently, the Capital District Committee Against Apartheid was formed to prevent the South African team from stopping in Albany.

Brace said the "pulse is running high" in the black community over the impending visit. The alderman said he would offer a resolution at the next council meeting condemning the visit.

Among those on hand last night to express their opposition to the visit were Clara Satterfield, president of the Albany chapter of the NAACP; Joseph Brown, vice chairman of the local Black and Hispanic Political Caucus; and Sam Burton, president of the West Hill Neighborhood Association, the area in which Bleecker Stadium is located.

Some aldermen expressed their support for preventing the visit. Ward 7 alderman Nancy Burton and Ward 14 alderman Philip DiPace vowed their support following the council session.

Despite the growing community pressure to halt the visit, Mayor Corning said last night he could do nothing to halt the match or prevent the visit.

"I have no power to stop them from playing in Albany," he said. "If they are going to play here, I'm certainly not going to welcome them. I'm not going to help them in anyway..."

Corning agrees with New York City Mayor Ed Koch that the city cannot revoke a permit issued to a public group for the use of a public facility. The Eastern Rugby Football Union is sponsoring the event. The Albany Knickerbockers, a local rugby team, will battle the South African contingent.

"I'm completely opposed to the entire philosophy of South Africa, but they have received visas from the federal government," Corning said. "How can you say you can come into the United States anywhere but Albany?"

The mayor said he would try to keep the entire event as low-key as possible. He said he preferred the match take place in Bleecker Stadium rather than in "some open field" where the city could not provide adequate security for fans and players.

The Gazette's Albany bureaus are located in the Wellington Hotel, on State Street in the city, and at 1339 Central Ave.

Reporters Steve Nelson, Stephen Goldstein and Phil Blanchard may be reached at 434-2912 at the Wellington, while Pam Snook and Carlo Wolff may be reached at 458-7055 at the Central Avenue office.

Kickerbocker News 8/28/81

Massive anti-rugby protest

Albany game target of NYC apartheid foes

By SUSAN SCHULMAN
Kickerbocker News Reporter

A New York City-based anti-apartheid organization has decided to convene a large-scale demonstration in Albany when the South African Springboks team plays rugby at Bleecker Stadium next month.

The steering committee of the Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour (SART) coalition voted Thursday night to move

the demonstration from New York City to Albany despite an announcement earlier in the day that the Springboks' canceled New York City game has been moved to a municipally owned stadium in Rochester.

"We will fully mobilize for Albany," said SART spokesman Richard Lap-

chick. "Since the mayor in Albany has made a decision to go ahead with the match there at a public facility and the people in Albany organized against it, we feel this is the most appropriate site."

SART represents more than 100 civil rights, religious, political and sports

organizations which Lapchick said will be asked to charter buses to attend the "peaceful" protest rally, when the Springboks play the United States' Eastern Rugby Union (ERU) team at city-owned Bleecker Stadium Sept. 22.

Lapchick said a professor at State University at Albany will organize

in the movement have previously suggested 2,000 to 10,000 people would attend.

He and other organizers have emphasized it will be a peaceful demonstration against South Africa's policy of apartheid, and not against members of the Springboks team or the spectators attending the match.

After last Monday's announcement by Mayor Erastus Corning II that the

Continued on Page 7-A

students at all SUNY campuses, while others will contact students at college campuses in Boston, Amherst, New Haven, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

Lapchick said it is impossible to estimate the size of the crowd expected at the demonstration, but he and others

- Move -

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Continued ... 8/26/81 article

Mass protest at Albany rugby game

CONTINUED

South African team could play at Bleecker Stadium, groups opposing Corning's decision responded by saying the SART steering committee would be expected to change its scheduled national protest from New York City to Albany.

Local civil rights and religious leaders said that by allowing the team to play at a municipal stadium, the city would be condoning the apartheid policy of South Africa, which enforces separation of the races. But citing constitutional rights, Corning said while he personally abhors apartheid, the Springbok team could not be kept out of the stadium because of the political philosophy of the South African government.

At the time, Albany was the only city on the Springboks' tour permitting the South African team to use municipal facilities.

A game scheduled for Chicago is being played at a private facility and New York City's Mayor Edward Koch has revoked permission for the Springboks to play at a municipal stadium Sept. 26.

The Eastern Rugby Union had said the New York City game probably would be played at a private facility.

But officials in Rochester announced Thursday afternoon that the New York City game has been rescheduled for a municipal stadium in Rochester.

Those officials said they anticipate the games will attract protesters, but that, as of Thursday evening, no one had spoken out for or against the game.

ERU President Thomas Selfridge confirmed Thursday that his organization

requested use of the Rochester stadium after Koch reversed his initial decision and denied the Springboks team use of a municipal stadium downstate.

"It's a great place for rugby," Selfridge said when asked why the game was being moved to Rochester. "It's the pulse of the rugby scene."

Unlike Albany's Bleecker Stadium, Rochester's city-owned Hollender Stadium is leased to a private corporation.

As a result, rather than requesting permission of Rochester city officials for use of Hollender Stadium, the ERU went to the Rochester Flash Inc., which leases the city's stadium for \$1 a year, then subleases the facility for sporting and entertainment events.

Under the lease agreement with the city, Rochester Flash can sublease the stadium for specific sporting events, including rugby games, without getting the city's approval for each event, according to Arthur Deutsch, Rochester's administrator of public assembly facilities.

Deutsch said the city is not "debating the merits" of the Springboks' games, just abiding by a legal lease agreement with Rochester Flash Inc.

Richard Kraft, general manager of Rochester Flash, said Thursday that his organization was approached by Selfridge and James Townsend, a Rochester attorney who is director of the ERU, soon after Koch revoked permission for the Springboks game. Koch cited the \$400,000 in security the game would cost the city, which was being threatened with massive demonstrations and protests from groups who consider the Springbok tour a political

tool of the South African government.

Kraft said he is aware of the controversy surrounding the Springboks' tour, but disagrees with opponents who say a city is condoning apartheid by permitting the South African team to play in municipal facilities.

"We are doing it for the money," Kraft said. "We don't believe politics and sports should be intermingled."

Kraft wouldn't disclose how much the ERU is being charged to use the Rochester facility. He said the rugby union will be responsible for providing its own security inside the 19,000-seat Hollender Stadium.

Kraft said he is working out a security plan that will be reviewed by the Rochester police chief.

"We expect some demonstration," Kraft said. "We are doing it (devising a security plan) as a preventive measure."

Kraft added his organization is not co-sponsoring the Springboks game, just subleasing the stadium as a money-making venture.

Selfridge said the Rochester stadium is one of several in which the ERU was given permission to play the Springboks game originally scheduled for New York City.

Included in the list, Selfridge said, was the Meadowlands arena in New Jersey; Gaelig Park, a city-owned stadium in New York City that is leased to a private organization, and Robert F. Kennedy Stadium in Washington, D.C.

"RFK said if they have visas they can play there," Selfridge said, "reinforcing the fact that only the federal government has a foreign policy, not the cities."

Anti-apartheid forces plan strategy for rugby

By Carol DeMare
Staff Writer

Opponents of a scheduled American tour by South African rugby players began organizing a demonstration Saturday to protest apartheid on what they called a "Day of Shame" in Albany.

The rally is expected to draw thousands — organizers hope as many as 10,000 — to Albany's Swinburne Park when the Springboks, the South African team, play Sept. 22 in city-owned Blecker Stadium.

Additionally, a legal committee will explore the possibility of obtaining an injunction to stop the game between an all-star team from the Eastern Rugby

Union and the Springboks, said leaders of the Albany Coalition Against Apartheid.

"It will be called a 'Day of Shame for Albany and America,'" said the group's Clara Satterfield.

About 30 representatives of various local civic, civil rights, religious and other community groups met at the Albany Urban League on Livingston Avenue Saturday afternoon to plan rally strategy.

Among them was Richard Lapchick, organizer of New York City's SART (Stop Apartheid Rugby Tour).

Albany was chosen for the national demonstration because "the mayor made a clear decision about the match," it is the state capital, and that has "symbolic value," and "we were impressed with the commitment here" to oppose the match, he said.

The Albany match is "clearly the most prominent game of the tour," he said.

On Monday, Mayor Erastus Corning II announced

he would allow the game to be played at Blecker Stadium.

The rally and demonstration at Swinburne Park, which is next to Blecker Stadium, has sufficient open space "so we will be off the street," said Satterfield. The group established committees to "do the various things to produce the planned and orderly march," she said during a news conference after Saturday's meeting.

National speakers will be sought for the rally, the leaders said.

Approximately 100 national groups have said they supported the protest, according to Satterfield. "Many have large constituencies in the Northeast some three to four hours from Albany," she said. It is conceivable that these groups could each send three or four busloads of demonstrators, she said.

The rally is planned as a peaceful demonstration 5th Ward Alderman Nebraska Brace said. "But you never can tell what could happen when you get a large number of people together."

protest

10,000 people," he said, adding he hoped the demonstration will remain peaceful.

Lapchick predicted it would be expensive for the city to police the demonstration. In New Zealand, where the South African rugby team has been touring, the cost has run to \$10 million dollars to quell demonstrations, many of which were violent, he said. His organization — he is also national chairman of ACCESS (American Coordinating Committee for Equality in Sport and Society) — is still "working very hard" to get the Reagan administration to revoke the visas of the rugby players, he said.

The protesters claim that the Springboks tour is a propaganda move by the South African government to win approval for apartheid, a policy of racial oppression.

It is not known if there are grounds to serve court papers on the mayor and Common Council leaders to enjoin the match from being played on public property, and that is what the legal committee is studying, Satterfield said.

Fancy Fruit
Baskets
for loved ones.

The #92132 lawn
mower advertised
in this week's Sears

8/30/81

9/1/81

U.S. rugby players want

By SUSAN SCHULMAN

Kickerbocker News Reporter

A group of rugby players in the Eastern Rugby Union (ERU) is asking its parent organization to cancel the upcoming tour by the South African Springboks team.

"We don't want to play rugby with them," said John Logan of the Boston area's Mystic River rugby club and spokesman for the recently formed coalition "Against South Africa Playing" (ASAP).

"Member clubs (within the ERU)

were not consulted in the decision to invite the Springboks and we want to get the word out that this is not what the rugby community wants," he said Monday.

Logan said his group consists of more than 50 rugby players who belong to local rugby clubs with membership in the ERU. The group formed about a month ago, he said, in response to the inability of individual members to persuade ERU leadership to cancel the Springboks' tour, which will bring the team to Albany Sept. 22.

'This is just going to wreck rugby'

— John Logan, Against South Africa Playing coalition

Logan, who described himself as being of mixed racial heritage, said the ERU has embarrassed the sport by inviting the Springboks to America and has also thwarted efforts to attract blacks to the predominantly white sport.

Logan said ASAP sent out an initial

9/1/81

South Africa tour canceled

protest letters resulting from the mailing.

"We are always interested in the feelings and thoughts of members of our clubs and we will certainly take them into consideration for future invitations," was Selfridge's only comment on Logan's statements.

But the ERU president did say two black rugby players are among the 30 semifinalists competing for selection to the ERU's 15-man team that will play against the Springboks.

Selfridge also said he has received

of about 300 letters to officials estimated 350 rugby clubs in the Rugby Union area asking them to cancel the tour.

the ERU president, Thomas of Schenectady, of their op- said Monday that he hadn't a copy of Logan's letter, nor

only three letters from persons in the rugby community opposing the games. Two of those letters, Selfridge said, were from Logan and the Boston area rugby club.

The Springboks' tour, scheduled for next month, includes a Sept. 22 game at Albany's Blecker Stadium that is expected to be the focal point of a national demonstration organized by the New York City-based Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour (SART) coalition.

Continued on Page 7-A

U.S. rugby players want tour canceled ...

CONTINUED

SART, as well as Logan and other groups against the tour, oppose South Africa's policy of apartheid that requires racial segregation.

Proponents of the tour argue they, too, oppose apartheid, but sports and politics should not be mixed.

When announcing last week he would permit the Springboks team to use Albany's municipal stadium, Mayor Erastus Corning II said that on consti-

tutional grounds, a group should not be prohibited from using a city stadium because of the political philosophy of its government.

Logan, however, went on to argue the Springboks is not the South African all-star team it is reported to be because blacks are excluded.

"This team doesn't represent the rugby players of South Africa. It represents the white rugby players of South Africa," he said. "Let them get a few black guys out there, then we'll

play them."

Logan said the ERU is "giving rugby a bad name" by inviting the South African team to America.

"This is just going to wreck rugby," Logan said. "Many people in rugby are not happy with this decision."

Logan, who said he has played rugby for 15 years and was the alternate wrestler from the United States in the 1972 Olympics, said he has played on past rugby all-star teams such as the one that will be pitted against the

Springboks.

"I played for several all-star sides and I thought it was the high point of my career. Now I am embarrassed to say I played," Logan said.

Logan described the rugby issue as a thuman, "and not a political one.

"Even if the tour goes on, we want word going out that rugby is not a racist sport," Logan said. "ERU arranged this without consulting the clubs. We don't want the world to think we were part of that decision."

9/1/81
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Albany Knickerbocker News
9/1/81

Candidate tackles mayor over rugby

Independent Albany mayoral candidate Charles L. Touhey has taken issue with last week's decision by Mayor Erastus Corning II not to prevent a team of South Africans from playing in a rugby match at city-owned Bleecker Stadium.

Touhey, commenting on the controversy surrounding the rugby match, disagreed Monday with the constitutional reasoning cited by Corning in allowing the match to go on as scheduled Sept. 22.

"Our Constitution does not guarantee that visiting athletes from foreign countries have the right to use any city-owned stadiums anywhere they choose," Touhey said. "Local communities do have control over the use of their facilities regardless of whether the State Department in Washington has decided to issue visas."

Local civil rights and religious leaders have argued the city will be condoning the apartheid policy of South Africa — which enforces separation of the races — by allowing the Springbok rugby team to play in Bleecker Stadium. A New York City-based anti-apartheid group has said it will stage a large-scale demonstration outside the stadium when the game is played.

Touhey said Corning's decision should be considered "in terms of the disruption of our community."

"What possible benefits will our local community realize from being drawn into the center of this international controversy?" he asked. "In terms of the human impact on our city, Mayor Corning has made the wrong decision."

The independent candidate concluded his statement by quoting Lincoln to the effect that "what is morally wrong, can never be politically right."

Corning, a Democrat running for his 11th four-year term, said Touhey "has a right to his opinion."

But the mayor added: "From my point of view, as I stated, I felt it was wrong to prohibit them."

"He (Touhey) is looking at it from a very narrow approach, it seems to me, and I looked at it from a very broad approach," Corning said.

Corning also questioned why Touhey, in quoting the mayor's Aug. 24 statement explaining his decision, had left out a sentence referring to the constitutional right of peaceful assembly. Touhey's statement cited Corning's reference to an individual's "right to publicly espouse an unpopular cause" and then quoted from the concluding sentence of the mayor's statement.

KEN 9/1/81

Schenectady Gazette
9/2/81

Players Oppose Game

ALBANY (AP) — A spokesman claiming to represent more than 50 rugby players from the Northeast says his followers are opposed to this month's scheduled games against the South African Springboks team.

* * *
John Logan of the Boston-area Mystic River Rugby Club said more than 50 athletes have joined a coalition called "Against South African Playing." Logan said his group has sent some 300 letters to leaders of many of the 350 clubs that make up the Eastern Rugby Union, which invited the Springboks to play on Sept. 22 in Albany, N.Y., and on Sept. 26 in Rochester, N.Y.

An August tour of New Zealand by the Springboks sparked nationwide protests, sometimes violent, by demonstrators who oppose South Africa's discriminatory racial policies of apartheid.

"Member clubs of the ERU were not consulted in the decision to invite the Springboks and we want to get the word out that this is not what the rugby community wants," Logan said.

ERU President Thomas Selfridge of Schenectady, N.Y., said he had received only three protest letters from rugby players, two of those coming from Logan and the Mystic River club.

"We are always interested in the feelings and thoughts of members of our clubs and we will certainly take them into consideration for future invitations," Selfridge said.

Civil rights leaders and other opponents of the Springboks' American visit have promised to deliver thousands of demonstrators to the New York games, as well as to a match scheduled in Chicago Sept. 19. The site of the Chicago match has not been disclosed.

The ERU scheduled its Sept. 26 game in Rochester after New York City Mayor Edward Koch, citing safety reasons, denied permission to use the city-owned stadium at Randall's Island. Albany Mayor Erastus Corning II angered opponents of the game last week when he refused to take similar action.

9/3/81

Black rugby player loves both his race and his game

9/3/81

By SUSAN SCHULMAN
Knickerbocker News Reporter

As a rugby player, Michael Pitts is looking forward to the South African Springboks team playing at Albany's Bleecker Stadium this month.

As a black man, he's equally as pleased that thousands of people are expected to gather outside the stadium to protest apartheid while the match is being played.

"I have ambivalent feelings on it," Pitts said Wednesday, sitting at his desk in the Albany branch of the U.S. ACTION office, a federal agency that oversees the Peace Corps, VISTA and other social programs.

"The situation here bothers me. As an enthusiast of the sport, I'd like to see the game be played.

Still, I have heard — and am still hearing by many — that the game could become a propaganda tool.

"I have to be realistic about this," Pitts continued. "If I thought canceling the game would eliminate apartheid, I would be for dropping it. But that wouldn't happen.

That talk of the match promoting apartheid is superficial.

"The bottom line is (if the tour is canceled) we would be deprived of having the experience of playing the Springboks and we'd have the same ambiguous foreign policy of maintaining the status quo in South Africa because of its strategic defense and economic significance."

While he is not one of the two black players vying to be on the Eastern Rugby Union's all-star team that will be pitted against the Springboks, Pitts, 31, and an Albany resident, is the only black player on Albany's rugby team, the Knickerbockers.

Much of what Pitts has to say about the Springboks tour of the United States parallels the sentiments of Thomas Selfridge, president of the Eastern Rugby Union. The ERU invited the Springboks to play games in Albany, Chicago and Rochester.

The Albany game — set for Sept. 22 at Bleecker Stadium — is the target of a national anti-apartheid protest being staged by the New York City-based Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour.

Like Selfridge, Pitts said any genuine protest against apartheid should also be aimed at the American corporations whose businesses are supporting South Africa's ruling regime.

A boycott of companies that manufacture and

sell products in South Africa could result in businesses losing money and having to lay off employees.

"Let see how the protesters feel if they or their families lose their jobs," he said. "The bottom line often is if you don't have a job, your social conscience often goes out the window."

And like Selfridge, Pitts said the protesters are not against the game but against South Africa's regime and the United States' policy toward that country.

But unlike Selfridge, Pitts acknowledged that, given a string of international events, it is no longer realistic to say sports and politics are not connected.



M. Pitts

'As an enthusiast . . . I'd like to see the game be played. Still, I have heard — and am still hearing by many — that the game could become a propaganda tool.'

—Rugby player Michael Pitts

Pitts said rugby in America might get a "negative kick" from the Springboks' tour.

And he also acknowledged that when cities such as Albany allow the Springboks to use municipal facilities, Washington gets the message that Americans will — despite apartheid — interact with South Africa.

Nevertheless, as a rugby player, Pitts said the Springboks' tour will give American rugby players a chance to test their skills against what are acknowledged to be the best players in the world.

"Everyone wants to shoot for the best and at least know what the best is," Pitts said.

Pitts added that, if he were asked, he would play against the Springboks.

"I would have loved to have played," he said. "Most of the teams I play are all white anyway."

Pitts said he plans to attend the match as a spectator, perhaps wearing a "Stop Apartheid" T-shirt.

"People need to get active; being vocal is not enough," he said. "Protesting shows people are concerned."

Schenectady Gazette
9/3/81

Moynihan Defends Reagan Relaxation

By MARK D. FRANK
ROCHESTER, N.Y. (UPI) —
Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan,
D-N.Y., said Wednesday he does
not believe "one bit" that Ronald
Reagan is a lazy president,
as Newsweek magazine claimed
in an article this week.

The article quoted aides as
saying Reagan was a disengaged
president who worked
about three hours a day.

During a Rochester news
conference, Moynihan, a Democrat,
defended the Republican chief
executive.

"I don't believe that one bit,"
Moynihan said. "The fact that he
makes a decision not to exhaust
himself is a fact in his favor.
You never know when you may
have to stay up three days in a
row."

"I don't think there's anything
the matter with presidents get-
ting a good night's sleep," he
continued.

On another matter, Moynihan
said he wished a rugby team
from South Africa would not go
through with its scheduled U.S.
tour, including matches later
this month in Rochester, Albany
and Chicago.

The South African team's tour

has sparked controversy be-
cause of that country's policy of
apartheid, a system of strict racial
segregation.

"I would wish they were not
here," Moynihan said. "I think
the judgment made in New York
City not to invite the team was
right."

New York City Mayor Ed-
ward Koch canceled a scheduled
game in a city-owned stadium
after receiving numerous pro-
tests concerning the match.

Moynihan also said he would
do everything in his power to
ensure the defeat of a proposal
before Congress to slash Social
Security benefits by 40 percent
in January for people retiring at
age 62.

"It is without any precedent
in our history," Moynihan said.
"Such a proposal has never even
been entertained, much less sent
to the Congress as legislation."

"I'm not going to let that hap-
pen. It's not going to happen," he
vowed. "Social Security has got
to be protected."

Moynihan predicted Reagan's
tax cut measures would cause
havoc in the government during
the next several years.

Rugby Foes Score In Rochester Block

ALBANY — Opponents of the
South African rugby team's
planned U.S. tour claimed a victory
last night with the cancel-
lation of a scheduled game in
Rochester.

The Eastern Rugby Union,
which is sponsoring the tour,
had made arrangements to play
the game at a city-owned stadium
in Rochester after permis-
sion to use New York City's
Downing Stadium was revoked.
The Rochester Flash, a profes-
sional soccer team with the
lease to the stadium, had
planned to promote the Spring-
boks game over the objections
of police and other city officials.

William T. Haffner, treasurer
of the Eastern Rugby Union,
said the Rochester game has
been canceled but would be
moved to a secret location
"somewhere in the northeast."
He said the rugby group will
never say where the game will
be played.

The soccer team has sched-
uled a news conference for
today to discuss the matter.

The cancellation of the Roch-
ester match came as the Stop
the Apartheid Rugby Tour orga-
nization, a consortium of anti-
apartheid groups, set up shop in
the Albany NAACP-Urban
League office to coordinate its
planned Sept. 22 demonstration
to coincide with the Springboks'
appearance at Bleecker Sta-
dium.

William Robinson, a spokes-
man for SART, said Congress-
woman Shirley Chisholm and
the Rev. Jesse Jackson are
among those expected for the
Albany demonstration, although
their appearances have not yet
been confirmed.

With the Rochester game
wiped out, Albany stands as the

only site of planned Springboks
appearances where a game will
be played in municipal facili-
ties.

In a statement released by
Robinson, William Booth, SART
chairman, said, "the Eastern
Rugby Union is looking more
and more ridiculous every min-
ute. They are treating this as if
it is a guerilla action, moving
from city to city and secret site
to secret site."

In a related development the
South African rugby team has
become the target of an ouster
call by six House members who
recently toured Africa.

Tom Selfridge, president of
the Eastern Rugby Union has
been urged to cancel the union's
invitation to the team for three
matches in the United States,
including the Albany date.

Rep. Howard Wolpe, D-Mich.,
said in a letter to Selfridge the
18-day congressional trip
through Africa has convinced
the lawmakers that an Ameri-
can tour by the South African
team would lend legitimacy to
that nation's white minority re-
gime and its policies of apart-
heid, or racial segregation.

"Because of the pervasive den-
ial of basic human, economic
and political rights to South
Africa's black population, the
recent wave of over 200 ban-
nings and detentions of student,
labor and community leaders,
the brutal removal of over 1,500
squatters from the Cape Town
area and (South African Prime
Minister P.W.) Botha's recent
statement in Parliament refer-
ring to continued white domina-
tion in South Africa, we have
concluded that the Eastern
Rugby Union should withdraw
its invitation to the Springbok
rugby team," the letter said.

"The perception and interpre-
tation throughout black Africa
is that this tour represents yet
another example of the United
States relaxing its criticism of
the South African government
and, instead, contributing to its
international legitimacy and
credibility," the congressional
letter said. "In going forward
with the Springbok tour, we risk
doing great damage to our polit-
ical, economic and strategic in-
terests throughout the rest of
black Africa."

In addition to Wolpe, who is
chairman of the House Foreign
Affairs subcommittee on Afri-
ca, the letter was signed by
Democratic Reps. Chisholm, Ri-
chard Ottinger of New York,
Berkley Bedell of Iowa, George
Crockett of Michigan and Gus
Savage of Illinois.

Albany okays S. Africa game at Bleecker;

By Nancy Connell

Staff Writer
And Wire Reports

Albany has granted the South African rugby team permission to play in Bleecker Stadium in September, but the issue may come under additional review if there is community pressure against the game, Mayor Erastus Corning II said Monday.

The 30-man team, known as the Springboks, is coming to Albany as part of a world tour. The South African rugby players are currently in New Zealand, where their appearance has been marked by riots and demonstrations protesting South Africa's racial policies.

Corning was on vacation last week when a local group, the Capital District Committee Against Apartheid, publicly announced its opposition to the match, calling it a propaganda effort to soften criticism against South Africa's repressive racial policies.

"As far as I'm concerned it (the game) is on," Corning said. "We scheduled it some time ago."

"We are always willing to reconsider (based on the views of) any group who come in with a

request," Corning said. "There is no doubt about that at all."

Corning said he has received a few telephone calls about the game, but that no meeting has been scheduled with the committee against apartheid.

Michael Dollard, a spokesman for the committee, said Monday. "The mayor is going to be running for election. What he wants is what his constituency says. I think the issue will be resolved on the kind of popular pressure we can put together."

Dollard said the committee circulated petitions outside churches Sunday and has started a telephone network to call in protests to the mayor.

A match with the South African Springbok team is set for Sept. 22. The Albany game is one of three appearances scheduled on a national tour that includes matches in Chicago and New York City.

Asked about the accusation that the tour is a propaganda vehicle, Corning said, "The use of public property by any organization does not, to my way of thinking, connote approval of the principles of that organization."

"I very seldom enter into comments on international affairs in which I do not feel competent," Corning said of the apartheid question in general. "I have basic feelings against any kind of discrimination, of course." Corning said the South African game was

'As far as I'm concerned it (the game) is on . . . We scheduled it some time ago.'

— Mayor Erastus Corning

approved as part of the schedule of the local rugby team.

"This Eastern New York Rugby Association has very topnotch people," Corning said. "I have been very enthusiastic in supporting them. They informed us this team was on their schedule and they wanted to play this team. I felt this was their decision. This is in no way an endorsement of apartheid or discrimination of any nature."

Confusion, protests grow over rugby

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By Tom Friedman and David Brown Staff Writers

In the face of mounting protests, a rugby match featuring a South African team scheduled for Rochester Sept. 26 was in doubt Thursday.

However, there was considerable confusion late Thursday over whether the Rochester game had in fact been cancelled.

Rugby match

Continued from Page 1

Meanwhile, opponents of the match were already claiming a victory. "We have been told it was canceled because of the fear of violence," said Richard Lapchick, head of the Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour (SART). The match was scheduled between the South African team and the U.S. Eagles at Rochester's Holleder Stadium. Lapchick called the cancellation a "clear victory" for SART.

In Albany, Bill Robinson, the national spokesman for SART, said Thursday night that the Eastern Rugby Union "is looking more and more ridiculous every minute. They are treating this as if it were a guerrilla action, moving from city to city and secret site to secret site."

Meanwhile, six U.S. congressmen just back from a tour of Africa on Thursday urged the Eastern Rugby Union to withdraw its invitation to the South African rugby team for three matches in the United States.

In a letter to Selfridge, Rep. Howard Wolpe, D-Mich., said the 18-day congressional trip through Africa has convinced the politicians that an American tour by the South African team would lend legitimacy to that nation's oppressive racial policies.

Selfridge replied in an interview Thursday: "The Eastern Rugby Union doesn't set foreign policy of the United States. If the congressmen aren't interested in see the Springboks here, they should talk to (Secretary of State) Alexander (M.) Haig (Jr.) or (President) Ronald Reagan."

Albany Mayor Erastus Corning II, who has approved use of Bleecker Stadium for the game on Sept. 22, said he wasn't aware of the congressional protest and had no intention of changing his mind about use of the stadium.

"I have made my decision perfectly clear," he said. "What more can I say?" The South African team is currently scheduled to play U.S. teams Sept. 19 in Chicago and Sept. 22 in Albany.

New York City Mayor Edward I. Koch canceled a game in a city-owned facility earlier this summer, citing the dangers created by a proposed public demonstration.

The letter from the congressmen cited "the pervasive denial of basic human, economic and political rights to South Africa's black population ... detentions of student, labor and community leaders, the brutal removal of over 1,500 squatters from the Capetown area ... we have concluded that the Eastern Rugby Union should withdraw its invitation to the Springboks rugby team."

Robinson, of SART, said of the House members' stand:

"We applaud them for sending them the letter and publicly urge them to ask Haig to rescind the visas of the Springboks."

Meanwhile, Robinson said, his group has opened its Albany headquarters at the offices of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on Livingston Avenue.

But the latest development in the upcoming American tour by the South African Springboks made it increasingly likely that the game scheduled for Albany Sept. 22 would serve as a focal point for protests which have followed the team wherever it has played. Early Thursday, Bill Hafner, a spokesman for the Schenectady-based Eastern Rugby Union, was quoted by a wire service as saying the game would not be played in Rochester, but would "be played the same day at a different site."

However, Hafner called *The Times-Union* late Thursday and denied he had said the game had been cancelled. Hafner said he had only heard a number of reports, primarily from the press, that the game had been called off. "I said if in fact the game was cancelled, it would be played somewhere, presumably on the same day," said Hafner, adding that the game would be played "somewhere in the Northeast."

And Thomas Selfridge of Schenectady chairman of the Eastern Rugby Union, said Thursday afternoon that the game was still on in Rochester, but later that night, he would say only, "The Rochester Flash (soccer team) at p.m. tomorrow (Friday) will have a new conference." Hafner said if the game had indeed been cancelled, it may have been done either by the city of Rochester or the Flash, the Rochester

See RUGBY, Page

He declined to answer questions about the proposed protest for the Sept. 22 Albany game. In the past, organizers had said several thousand people — many bused up from New York — might demonstrate. The group has scheduled a press conference for 2 p.m. Saturday at the Arbor Hill Community Center at Lark and Livingston avenues in Albany. Robinson said among the speakers at the press conference would be Dr. Phillip Harrington, organizer of anti-apartheid protests in New Zealand, where the Springboks toured recently.

Schwendler, Gazette

9/4/81

Democrats Urge Rugby Scrub

By JOHN F. BARTON
WASHINGTON (UPI) — Six Democratic members of a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Africa asked the Eastern Rugby Union Thursday to cancel its invitation to the South African Springbok rugby team to tour the United States.

* * *
Chairman Howard Wolpe, D-Mich., said the committee members opposed the Springboks' visit to the United States this month for the first time because of South Africa's racial policies.

Signing the statement along with Wolpe were Democratic Reps. Shirley Chisholm and Richard Ottinger of New York, Berkeley Bedell of Iowa, George Crockett of Michigan and Gus Savage of Illinois.

Wolpe said, "Because of the pervasive denial of basic human, economic and political rights to South Africa's black population, the recent wave of over 200 bannings and detentions of student, labor and community leaders, the brutal removal of over 1,500 squatters from the Capetown area, we

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have concluded that the Eastern Rugby Union should withdraw its invitation to the Springbok rugby team."

Tom Selfridge, president of the Eastern Rugby Union, said by telephone from the organization's headquarters in Schenectady that the union appreciates "the concern of the congressional letter" but intends to go ahead with the tour.

"I think that it's very clear that neither the Eastern Rugby Union nor anyone in rugby sets or engages in foreign policy," Selfridge said. "If there is some issue of foreign policy, the congressman should address his concerns to the State Department, which issued the visas. We are only going to engage in a rugby match and we will go ahead with those plans."

Wolpe said that during a recent visit to Africa by committee members, Daniel Arap Moi, president of Kenya and chair-

man of the Organization of African Unity, Zimbabwe Prime Minister Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and President Slad Barre of Somalia all urged that the invitation be cancelled.

Mayor Edward Koch of New York refused to permit the Springboks to play in the city because of possible unrest but matches are scheduled for Sept. 19 in Chicago, Sept. 22 in Albany.

"Many have argued that sport and politics do not mix well and that the Springboks themselves are not responsible for the South African government's apartheid policies," Wolpe said.

* * *
"...groups' visit would risk doing great damage to our political, economic and strategic interests throughout the rest of black Africa and risk contributing to what is already a growing body of international criticism for embracing the white minority regime in South Africa," Wolpe said.

Schwendler, Gazette

9/5/81

No Change in Plan, Rugby Match On

By PHIL BLANCHARD
Gazette Reporter

COLONIE — The cancellation of the South African Springboks' rugby game in Rochester will have no effect on plans for the team's Albany appearance on Sept. 22, the president of the Eastern Rugby Union said yesterday.

* * *
The Rochester Flash, a professional soccer team that holds the lease on the stadium, announced yesterday that an agreement to let the Springboks play was being canceled because of concern over security.

Thomas Selfridge, the ERU president, said pressure from police and other Rochester officials forced the cancellation. The Rochester game will be moved to an as-yet undetermined location, he said.

With the removal of Rochester from the Springboks' itinerary, Albany is now the only city on the team's three-city tour in which a game will be held in a municipally-owned stadium. That fact, and Mayor Erasmus Corning II's refusal to cancel the game at Blecker Stadium, has led anti-apartheid groups to target Albany for a national demonstration on Sept. 22.

A game is also to be played somewhere in the Chicago area, but in privately owned facilities whose location also have not yet been revealed.

* * *
Selfridge spoke at a news conference at the Americana Inn attended not only by reporters but by organizers of the anti-apartheid rally.

Selfridge, who since the controversy began has adopted the slogan "sports and politics don't mix," began his news conference on a sardonic note by showing reporters the difference between the balls used for rugby, football and soccer. Then, after noting that only one sports reporter was in attendance, he displayed the parts of a rugby player's uniform.

The conference was interrupted twice by William Robinson, an organizer for the New York-based Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour organization, who used the forum to attack Selfridge for his positions on the South African team's appearance. Robinson and five other SART-affiliated persons were allowed to stay.

Robinson asked Selfridge about African press portrayals of him as a racist.

"Tom Selfridge isn't a racist and isn't a friend of apartheid," Selfridge said.

Selfridge admitted that the publicity surrounding the Springboks' planned tour has hurt ticket sales for the Blecker Stadium date. Originally, he said, the intent was to draw 5,000 to 6,000 persons for the game; but now, he said, he expects only hard-core rugby fans — perhaps 2,000 to 3,000 — about 1,500 tickets have been sold, he said.

Schwendler, Gazette

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Springboks denied Rochester stadium use

By ROBERT WARD
Knickerbocker News Reporter

Albany's Bleecker Stadium apparently will be the only publicly owned facility to host the South African Springboks rugby team in its September U.S. tour.

The Rochester Flash, a soccer team which leases Holleter Stadium from the city of Rochester, announced Friday it is withdrawing permission for the Springboks and an American team organized by the Eastern Rugby Union (ERU) to play in the stadium Sept. 26.

Thomas Selfridge of Schenectady, president of the ERU, immediately held a press conference to criticize Rochester public officials and to announce all three games on the South African team tour will still be played.

Selfridge also said the opposition to the game has reduced ticket sales for the Albany game. While 5,000 to 7,000 were originally

expected, only 2,000 to 3,000 "hard-core rugby fans" are expected to buy tickets now, he said.

The Rochester decision will not affect the Sept. 22 game scheduled for Bleecker Stadium, Selfridge emphasized.

He said the game formerly scheduled for Rochester will take place in another, privately owned, site, although he said that has not been chosen.

Although he said the most likely sites for a rugby game are publicly owned, strong opposition to games being held in such facilities has convinced him to avoid them for new scheduling of the Springboks games.

Felix Lapine, an owner of the Flash team, held a press conference in Rochester to announce withdrawal of permission for the Springboks to play in the municipal stadium.

The owner cited the possibility of violent protests and the soccer team's responsibility to the community as reasons for withdrawing

permission.

Selfridge, at a press conference in the Americana Inn, Colonie, said Rochester officials were guilty of "severe interference" in the soccer and rugby teams' affairs.

The ERU president also took the opportunity to again criticize the groups trying to block the game.

"The heckler's veto is one we call on all Americans to reject," he said, adding groups such as the South West African People's Organization and the Pan African Coalition "are doing more damage to American traditions than to South Africa."

The two groups are dedicated to overthrow of the white-minority rule in South Africa, where the official apartheid policy means repression and poor living conditions for most non-whites. Both groups have also been active in the fight to stop the Springboks' tour of the United States.

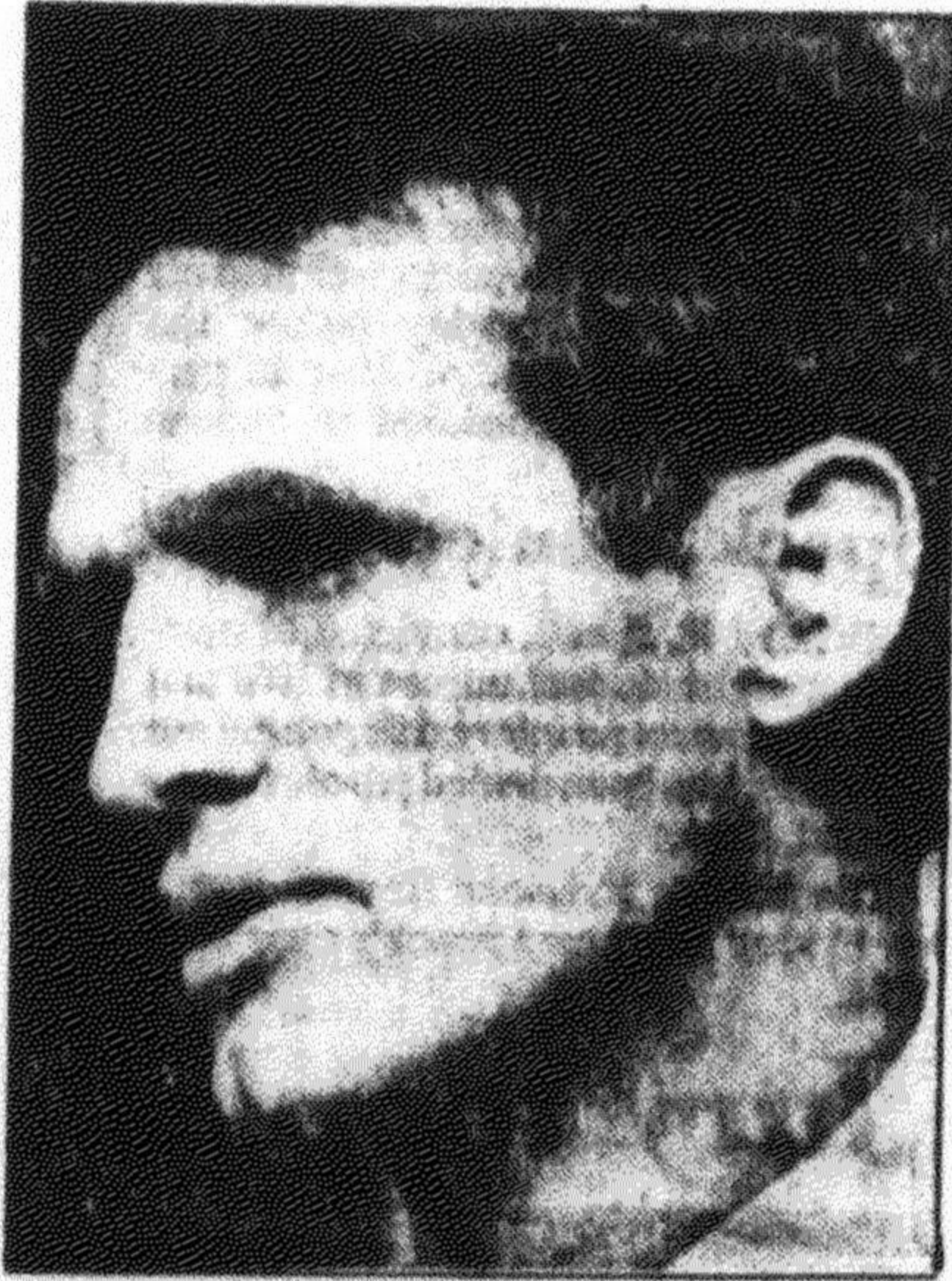
The ERU usually gives any profits to a local charity, but the reduced number of tickets expected to be sold probably will only cover expenses, he said.

A representative of the New York City-based Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour coalition who attended Selfridge's press conference hailed the Rochester decision as a "victory" for the anti-apartheid movement.

Bill Robinson, a spokesman for the protest group, said those opposed to the game will continue to work against it in hopes of canceling all the games.

But Albany Mayor Erastus Corning II had no comment about the Rochester decision, and said earlier in the day any change there would not affect his decision to allow the game to be held in Albany's stadium.

The Rochester site was chosen after New York Mayor Edward Koch withdrew permission for the South African team to play in a New York stadium. A third ERU-Springboks game is set for a private facility in Chicago.



Thomas Selfridge
... won't give up

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Rugby ticket sales lag; Rochester

By Jonathan D. Salant

Staff Writer

Ticket sales for the Sept. 22 contest in Albany between the Eastern Rugby Union all-star team and the South African Springboks have been hurt by the furor over the game, organizers said Friday.

Only 2,000 to 3,000 persons — instead of an original estimate of 6,000 — are expected to attend the match at Bleecker Stadium, Eastern Rugby Union officials said.

In another development, a match involving the South African team and scheduled for Rochester was officially canceled by its sponsor Friday, leaving Albany as the only New York municipality willing to host the controversial squad.

Organizations opposed to South Africa's oppressive racial policies have promised to stage protests outside

Bleecker Stadium in Albany.

Those groups had objected to the Rochester game, too, and the Rochester Flash soccer team announced Friday that the Sept. 26 match was being cancelled.

Flash team officials said they killed the game because they feared for the safety of players and spectators.

The Flash, who lease the city-owned Hollender Stadium, had agreed to sponsor the game after New York City Mayor Edward Koch refused the use of Downing Stadium on Randall's Island.

Meanwhile, the executive director of the United States Olympic Committee, Col. F. Don Miller, U.S. Army (Ret.), said that the rugby tour may spark a boycott of the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles on the scale of the U.S.-led one at last year's Moscow games.

"We look upon this rugby tour as counterproductive to to the 1984 Olym-

pic games and Los Angeles," Miller said in a telephone interview Thursday. "It is also counterproductive to the development of rugby as a sport in the United States. We're dealing with human rights issues here."

At a press conference in Coltone Friday afternoon, Eastern Rugby Union President Tom Selfridge said that the Albany game would go on as scheduled and that another game to replace the Rochester contest would be scheduled at a date and place to be named later.

Selfridge blamed both the Rochester decision and the Olympic committee's statement on politics.

"We think the position that sports and politics do not mix," Selfridge said. "If they do, we cannot decide where to draw the line. American Rugby will welcome any team from any country

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match canceled

with any beliefs if they play the game according to the spirit of the laws."

But Col. Miller, pointing to the 1976 Montreal Olympic boycott because New Zealand played South Africa in rugby and the threatened 1982 boycott of the Commonwealth games over the same issue, said it wasn't a question of politics.

"We do not consider this to be necessarily a political matter," he said. "We consider it to be one of human rights issues. Part of our code is to oppose any racial, religious or political discrimination."

Miller said that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) told him that 51 nations, most of them African, might boycott the 1984 games. Miller said he heard similar sentiments from representatives of those countries during an IOC meeting in July.

In Rochester, a city spokeswoman

applauded the decision to cancel the game.

"We are very pleased to have learned about the cancellation of the game," Connie Wilder said. "The Rochester Flash Inc. made the decision in the best interests of the community."

Also applauding the decision was Mike Young of Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour, a New York-based group which is organizing the Albany protest.

"This is a tremendous victory," he said. "People hate apartheid. They hate our government's support of apartheid."

Opponents of South Africa's racial policy should focus their protests at the U.S. government instead of the Eastern Rugby Union, Selfridge said.

"They should direct their attention at Washington D.C.," Selfridge said.



TOM SELF

...protest high ball...

9/6/81
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New Zealander arrives to aid anti-rugby plans

Says he helped stop Springbok game

By Carol DeMare
Staff Writer
and wire reports

A New Zealand college professor, who says he was among demonstrators who stopped the South African Springbok rugby team from playing one of its scheduled games in that country, was in Albany Saturday to support a planned protest of the team's appearance here.

Philip Harington, 29, a sociology instructor at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand, met with leaders of the Albany Coalition Against Apartheid at the Arbor Hill Community Center.

"I want to give a message of thanks from the people of New Zealand for not making us feel alone in the world," Harington said at a news conference after the meeting.

Meanwhile, in Auckland, New Zealand, protesters opposed to the racial supremacy policies of South Africa continued their protests, battling riot police Saturday outside the stadium where the Springbok rugby team played.

There were other demonstrations in Wellington and Christchurch over the

tour by the South African national rugby team.

Harington said he is a member of HART (Halt All Racist Tours), a New Zealand anti-apartheid coalition, which opposed the tour and organized demonstrations.

The team is scheduled to play in the city-owned Bleecker Stadium Sept. 22. The Albany opponents have tagged the event a "Day of Shame for Albany and America."

On July 25 when the Springboks were scheduled to play against a champion team in Hamilton, New Zealand, a city of about 90,000 population, some 400 opponents converged on the playing field and another 4,000 demonstrators gathered outside the stadium, Harington said.

The game was called off when the protesters refused to clear the field, he said.

Violence erupted there as a result of the "backlash from rugby supporters," toward the demonstrators, Harington said. "Rugby is a way of life in New Zealand, for the men especially," he said.

Harington, who is enroute to Great
See NEW ZEALAND/ B-5