

Historians generally agree that there was undisputed colonial recognition of the AmaHlubi's territory until the "Langalibalele rebellion" around 1873 and that the "rebellion" was manufactured because of colonial jealousy over AmaHlubi success as small farmers. Had there not been differences between Langalibalele and the colonial authorities, the AmaHlubi would today still be living on the land they are

now claiming. AFRA believes the land being claimed by the AmaHlubi should be returned to them and should remain under South Africa. We also believe the AmaHlubi should be given the necessary support, resources and assistance to develop this land, when it is restored, so that they can again become the thriving agricultural community they once were.

The EFA's suggestion that much of the land which the AmaHlubi are claiming could be incorporated into KwaZulu seems to be an attempt to use ACLA to revive old-style apartheid consolidation proposals. A similar proposal was put forward under the Mentz Commission. We hope that ACLA will not allow itself to be drawn into such plans.

Some facts about the AmaHlubi claim

THE 38 farms being claimed lie within the original AmaHlubi location settled by them between 1849 and 1873. The AmaHlubi believe that this gives them a prior claim to the land which was empty when they settled there. Some of the land was sold to white farmers after the AmaHlubi were broken up in 1873 following the Langalibalele "rebellion".

Since the 1970s, the government has planned to buy up and consolidate into KwaZulu the farms being claimed by the AmaHlubi. The government now owns about 21 of the farms being claimed.

The AmaHlubi currently live at Draycott (Bhekuzulu) in the Estcourt District, where about 8 000 people are crowded into 1 000 acres of land. The AmaHlubi bought Draycott towards the end of the last century.

A pilot survey of the community which AFRA carried out in October 1991 showed that people are partly dependent on agriculture and want to continue farming. People said that they wanted to improve their farming

practices so that they could develop into a community of small farmers, organised on a communal basis and with some provision for people who were not able to or did not want to farm to settle in rural villages or towns. To realise this, the AmaHlubi need more land.

The AmaHlubi's submission to ACLA to get back their land is the latest in several attempts to do so. In 1926, AmaHlubi chief, Tatazela Radebe, increased the size of Draycott by 38 acres and then again in 1930 when the Ximba District of Location 1 was merged with the AmaHlubi land. In 1931, the chief wrote to the Estcourt Native Commissioner to ask for more land.

In 1972, a claim was made to the Bantu Affairs Commissioner in Pietermaritzburg for all land from Ntabamhlope to the Drakensberg between Giants Castle and Cathkin Peak, on the grounds that this had been Langalibalele's territory.

During the 1980s, the AmaHlubi also asked the KwaZulu government for more land, but nothing happened.

In 1989 the AmaHlubi were reportedly granted an interview with Mr Jurie Mentz, MP and chairman of the Commission for Cooperation and Development (now a member of the IFP), where they raised their claim. Mr Mentz reportedly agreed to raise the issue in parliament, but nothing further was heard.

Because of the lack of response from the government, the AmaHlubi contacted AFRA in early 1991 to strengthen their representation and to plan future development of land they might get back. They also joined with other rural land claiming communities to pressurise the government about their land claim.

In 1991, the government tried to auction off one of the major farms being claimed by the AmaHlubi. The sale was stopped through publicity around the attempted sale and pressure on the government to halt it. A second government attempt to sell off farms being claimed by the AmaHlubi was also stopped in February 1992.