

Lucas Pkiech – violent political rebel or Christian spiritual leader?

A sketch of events in the life of a controversial figure in Pokot history.

ERLING LUNDEBY

Introduction

The events being dealt with here took place in present day West Pokot District of Rift Valley Province, in Western Kenya. A crucial date in recent Pokot history is April 24th, 1950. On that fateful afternoon Lucas Pkiech, and some three hundred of his followers clashed with the colonial Kenya Government police troops, killing three European officers and an African policeman at Kollowa in East Baringo District. The immediate government crackdown and ensuing eight to ten years has made a deep impact on Pokot social and religious life. Hundreds were detained and imprisoned. Many never returned home. Numerous children lost one or both parents. Families were split on how to deal with the contentious issues. Some

followed; others rejected Lucas outright. Some cooperated with the authorities; others defied the government. And others tried to do both at the same time. When this painful period came to an end, nobody wanted to raise the issues again. Most Pokot simply wanted to be left alone in peace – which they basically were until the early 1980's.

Detention policies that were generally set in place by the colonial government in Kenya, and in Kikuyu particularly, have recently become clear. Elements of those policies and punishments were also utilized to quell rebellious elements in Pokot.¹ Like the Kikuyu, many of the Pokot people were severely traumatized. The “Kollowa Affray” still evokes very strong passions and is a very divisive issue in Pokot society.

The central figure in this violent incident is Lucas Pkiech, a person who, to this day, is hardly known nor understood historically, or even religiously. This is unfortunate since we now have a considerable group of followers who claim they belong to a church founded by Lucas. Until now, the little one knows of Lucas has been interpreted in light of the fiery nationalistic sect of Dini ya Musambwa (DyM) from neighbouring Western Province, which began in the late forties. The story of DyM and its leader Elijah Masinde has been well documented elsewhere, thus we will not be covering it in any detail.² The main thrust of this article, however, is to present major facts in the life of Lucas, the fate of his followers and certain developments in the movement after Lucas' death. This material will make it possible – and perhaps more meaningful – to understand Lucas and his adherents independent of Masinde's DyM.

In one sense, this is the story of an African initiated church. The literature on African initiated religious movements is rich. Research shows that there are both similarities and differences amongst these movements. The backgrounds of these movements are often quite complex and cannot be understood apart from their historic context. Briefly we should mention Bengt Sundkler of Sweden who did pioneering research in South Africa,³ David Barrett, who broadened the scope and contributed significantly later,⁴ and Allan Andersson who is presently recognized as a major interpreter of these churches and movements.⁵ We do not attempt to fit Lucas

and his present followers into this larger picture other than in general terms. Our aim, at this stage, is to tell the main points of their story.

Pokot in the 1940s

The British reluctantly agreed to take on Kenya as a protectorate and later colony around 1900. This was necessary, however, to protect their greater political interests in East Africa.⁶ The less economically promising regions, like Pokot, were left to their own, and the administration in East and West Pokot Districts was rather limited. It was responsible for collecting basic taxes, maintaining law and order, and enforcing certain measures to protect the environment. Hardly any development projects were being run due to a lack of motivation from the people,⁷ and no outsiders were permitted to travel or live in the interior without written permission from the District Commissioner.

Mission organisations were also struggling. The Anglicans started near the Ugandan border in the early 1930's, but moved to Kapenguria after a few years.⁸ In addition to their churches, the Anglicans were running some schools in their respective areas. But obtaining students was a challenge because young and able people were more needed at home. Africa Inland Mission, on their part, started working in East Pokot about the same time, but they experienced even less progress.⁹ Catholic fathers occasionally visited Kapenguria, but no formal work began in Pokot until 1943.

At this time, the Pokot were hardly part of the social and religious ferment taking place in the colony. What is more, they did not even consider themselves to be part of Kenya, but rather a country unto themselves. Kenya struggled to recover economically after WW2. On the other hand, war experiences had strengthened expectations of equality and dignity. These expectations could be felt in politics as well as in church work.¹⁰ For the Pokot, however, the good life was centred more around cattle – the more the better. Most Pokot were eager to see the British government leave so that they could move freely once again without interference from zoning laws, tax collectors, and agricultural officers who prevented overgrazing and called for a reduction in the number of their beloved cows.

Lucas Pkiech - early years

We can only trace the early years of Lucas with some certainty. We know that he was born around 1915 in Mwino, but his family later moved to Parau¹¹. He was enrolled in the Government African School in Kapenguria in 1932. He was later sent to Kabete Native Industrial Training Department outside Nairobi in 1934, to train for two years as a tailor and another two years as a blacksmith. This training made Lucas one of the most educated people in Pokot at the time. Back home in 1938, he moved to Chepareria where he set up a shop and did some farming.¹² He had brothers residing in the Chepareria-region at the time. One brother, called Lorewun, stayed at Keringet. He was tending the family cattle but did not follow Lucas' teachings.¹³

Around 1946 Lucas travelled to the neighbouring district of Uasin Gishu, which was part of the White Highlands – an area with strict colonial policies. It is likely that he met up with adherents of DyM and was captivated by their fiery rhetoric. By this time, DyM and Elijah had generated a lot of heat in the district. Generally they were opposed to various government agricultural programs. They also refused to heed conscript labour summons, disobeyed the chiefs, refused to vaccinate the cattle, and harassed and even assaulted government officers.¹⁴ In February 1945 Elijah was convicted of assault and sentenced to prison. During his stay in prison he was deemed insane and then transferred to Nairobi.

When Lucas was in Uasin Gishu, Elijah was not present.¹⁵ Most likely the two never met, but Lucas might very well have been informed and inspired by DyM's message. (Remarkably, Elijah also had attended the Kabete Native Industrial Training Department as Lucas did.)¹⁶ The government firmly believed Lucas was recruited and encouraged to return to preach the message of DyM in his home area, and subsequently, he gained a few converts in his home area near Keringet.

A somewhat different story of Lucas' early years, however, is presented by his present-day followers.¹⁷ For them it is vitally important to stress that Lucas' preaching did not commence after his contact with DyM, but years earlier when he encountered the divine.¹⁸ Around 1940, over a period of 18

months, Lucas received visions instructing him to be faithful to God. His followers suggest that by this time he was already a baptized Catholic believer.¹⁹ In his vision, “mediation”²⁰, he was taken to the Soghphogh River, near Tartar which is between Kapenguria and Kitale. The Holy Spirit supplied Lucas with a new name (i.e. Arasusu), seven songs about eternal life, and various commandments similar to the ones that Moses received. Lucas was specifically told: “This word will unite all tribes in this world, and this word will drive away all the evil things from this world.”²¹ Obedient to this divine calling, Lucas shifted his focus to preaching. He started around his home place of Keringet, continuing in nearby villages²² before being apprehended by the police.²³ Subsequent to being charged for holding an unlawful assembly and serving a short term in jail, he was released. Lucas continued with his ministry travelling alone to East Baringo, where he received his second mediation. Upon his return, the police picked him up a second time.²⁴

Lucas’ arrest, jail and escape from Nakuru

The government kept close watch on Lucas and he was twice warned by the authorities. On one occasion, Lucas was suspected of involving himself with another man’s wife.²⁵ Therefore, the police moved in arresting Lucas and 15 others on charges for holding an unlicensed meeting. The police made the connection to DyM in the neighbouring district which was, by 1948, an unlawful society. Concurrently, Elijah Masinde had been discharged from mental hospital to return home, but he immediately resumed his anti-government campaign. In February 1948 he was re-arrested and later deported to Lamu on the North coast.²⁶ The government refused to tolerate this political agitation, and on Aug. 18, 1948 Lucas was hit hard as well: 30 months in prison with hard labour. And ten of his followers received 12 months imprisonment and hard labour.²⁷

Lucas completed his sentence in Nakuru on July 9th, 1949, where he was declared an exemplary prisoner.²⁸ As a matter of routine, he was then transferred to a labour camp closer to Gilgil. However, on July 21st, he seized the opportunity to escape from the labour camp. His followers attribute his escape to supernatural intervention.²⁹ The authorities, however, did not

consider Lucas to be a dangerous prisoner, and to escape and disappear was perhaps not particularly difficult.³⁰

Lucas' run from Gilgil labour camp lasted from 1949 to 1950. While heading home, Lucas travelled by foot, but he also used the railway which at this time extended all the way to Kitale. He was fortunate to encounter friends along the way who were working on various farms, such as Kachute Anakimoi.³¹

While passing through Cherangany he and Kachute stayed for a brief period of time with the family of Lobuyet³², at Allen's farm. Lucas asked to be given his daughter Chemosop as a wife. Although she was not yet circumcised, her father agreed to let Lucas have her.³³ They continued on to Keringet where Lucas' brother was living. In Keringet Lucas also had two wives already established in a home, but the wives had not yet given birth to any children.³⁴ Kachute continued to his home in Kachelipa, but both of them returned to Lobuyet around Christmas 1949.

Lucas resumes preaching in Pokot

Lucas and his friends stayed with Lobuyet for four weeks before they left for Chepareria. In Chepareria they spent two days with chief Lotemeruk of Kipkomo³⁵ before Lucas moved on. After all, he was a fugitive. A young assistant, Rosti Lakuny³⁶, was arrested, interrogated by the police, and was later released. Kachute, however, was a free man and could move as he wanted. Both Kachute and Rosti started to spread the teachings of Lucas in their home areas, teachings that were considered seditious.³⁷ Even though the police pursued them, Rosti was able to vanish and link up with Lucas again together with three other friends.³⁸

From Chepareria Lucas moved North-East to Mwino, most likely in late January 1950.³⁹ By this time Lucas was being tracked, but it was difficult for the DC's point man and Administration Police to apprehend him since they learned of his presence in Chepareria two weeks after he had actually left.⁴⁰ Chemosop, his most recent wife, travelled with him. Lucas had no trustworthy friends in this area to stay with, so they slept in the open and in caves. They managed to win several converts whom they led to Kogh, a spectacular mountaintop and landmark at the entrance of Mwino valley.

They travelled for more than a month and found many additional converts. One of them was a woman named Cheriwoi, who together with Chemosop, taught the women.⁴¹ Finally they set their sights on “Zion,”⁴² but the trip was cut short by the events at Kollowa.

The message of Lucas

The converts testified that the Spirit came upon them during the meetings. Lucas and others would prophesy and the rest followed what was stated. Men and women received prophecies equally.⁴³ It was common for Lucas to see visions and shining lights like human beings or lamps moving towards him. It happened at times to others as well. When these shining figures came up close, they would quickly vanish; but the Spirit would then descend upon the person being approached causing him or her to shake, tremble and speak in tongues. This spirit-talk would be understood by the others present who were not possessed. Likewise, they would receive songs from the Spirit which would then be recited as a regular church praise song.⁴⁴

Lucas most likely considered himself a commissioned messenger. He taught people the songs he had been given in 1940, and he promised a very bright future for those who accepted his message. It can be summarized as such: Eternal life, freedom from European control, restoration of traditional customs⁴⁵, immunity from sickness, relief from blindness, immunity from gunfire, immunity from capture, increased fertility for old men, and no barrenness for women.⁴⁶ He surrounded himself with trusted followers, and asked the timid to remain behind since he anticipated much tension.⁴⁷

Barbara Bianco has convincingly suggested that Lucas' promise of an earthly Zion spoke directly to the felt needs and sense of crises in Pokot society. The colonial rule had dramatically limited mobility and thereby changed the means of obtaining and maintaining wealth as well as social and moral stability. Lucas cleverly played on basic symbols, language and songs to give voice to these basic themes in Pokot religion and society.⁴⁸

Lucas appointed leaders among the many followers he had instructed on this tour.⁴⁹ All these were subsequently arrested

after the Kollowa massacre and served long prison terms.⁵⁰ Kachute never returned. He disappeared while in police custody – most likely he was killed.⁵¹

Lucas told his followers that he shall go to Baringo, but not return. As events unfolded, his statement was regarded as a prophecy. Some friends were warned by the Spirit that troubles were brewing ahead. They wrote Lucas a letter to inform him, but he would not relent.⁵² Rosti even managed to prevent some from reaching Kollowa, and he himself was able to avoid immediate arrest by fleeing to Kaddam in Uganda.⁵³ Not all followers joined the group at Kollowa, but they were able to hear and observe the shooting from far. For some, unusual events occurred that afternoon, e.g. sudden and heavy rain-showers that looked similar to blood.⁵⁴

The Kollowa Affray

On April 22nd, 1950 the Kenyan Government was informed that Lucas was at the Ng'inyang trading centre.⁵⁵ A large contingent of police officers and soldiers gathered with reinforcements from Nakuru, even with a police airplane for back-up. The soldiers pursued Lucas and located him and his group at Kollowa near the river Kerio. The task was to arrest Lucas and then dismiss the crowd. But the operation came out of control as police were attacked. This took the police by surprise as the Pokot did not have a history of violence vis-a-vis the colonial government. The police defensive lines were completely overrun, and in the confusion that followed, three white colonial officers and a local police soldier were killed.⁵⁶ Once the dust settled the remaining colonial officer regained his composure, called the soldiers back, took control of the situation while arresting a number of people, and then returned to Ng'inyang in an orderly fashion. Lucas was positively identified among the dead, but it is unclear what happened to his body after it was taken to Nakuru. Being found about 85 yards from the police line, one can assume he died during the first volley of shots.⁵⁷ There is no grave and no official report, which is quite painful for his followers⁵⁸ and family⁵⁹ to bear. In the absence of verifiable official reports stories concerning supernatural events after the Kollowa confrontation began to circulate.⁶⁰

Those arrested at Kollowa were taken to Kapenguria to be tried. At the same time other soldiers were following the hot trail of Lucas. They rounded up followers and brought everyone (both men and women) to Kapenguria who had been with him or attended his meetings during the few weeks prior. In Mwino, they rounded up several, including a supporter named Prono. Interrogation methods were brutal and highly effective. Buried alive to his neck, he confessed to “singing” before he died.⁶¹ The little jail house in Kapenguria was quickly filled up, so many people had to be transferred to Kitale.

Trials and government clean-up operations

During 1951 and 1952, a series of trials were held in Kapenguria to deal with the prisoners. In connection with the Kollowa Affray 12 people were sentenced to hanging,⁶² the Baringo area was given a collective fine of 5000 head of cattle, and the locals in that particular area were forced to do collective labour. Those who had taken part in Lucas’ meetings throughout West and East Pokot were handed sentences ranging from two to nine years in prison. Many of them served far away in the remote regions of North-East Kenya.⁶³ Lucas’ wife Chemosop was able to slip away after the confusion in Kollowa and make her way to her parental home in Cherangany. A determined policeman was able to track her down, and during interrogation, she provided information that made it possible to build a case against many of Lucas’ followers.⁶⁴ She died in police custody.⁶⁵ Cheriwoi also slipped away but was apprehended. After some time in detention Cheriwoi was released.⁶⁶

There was no Defence Counsel for the accused. The District Commissioner served with extended authority, both as accuser and judge as well as being the chief administrator of the district. Those “proven” guilty were given a swift sentence while the other suspects were detained in order to be further observed and interrogated.⁶⁷

In order to deal with the large number of prisoners, detention and rehabilitation camps were built at Kamatira, a ridge behind Kapenguria. Here the prisoners were supposed to serve the last year of their term planting trees.⁶⁸ Smaller units were built in central Pokot, e.g. Sigor and Wakorr, where the prisoners

did maintenance work on the newly built road. Originally the camps were erected by and for a group of Kikuyu political detainees in connection to the Mau Mau uprising, which by this time had begun, but the prison authorities changed their minds and transferred the Mau Mau detainees to make room for local prisoners.

Several of the local Pokot chiefs, like Lotemeruk of Chepareria,⁶⁹ were fired because they failed to detect and report Lucas' activities. It was obvious that Lucas attracted some sympathy with several chiefs, that they did not consider him a security threat, and that they dared not challenge him. To this day there are songs that mock the chiefs who failed to do their jobs and lost their positions.

Prison conditions

The trials were thus summarily carried out, but it seems that people were not treated badly. Prisoners do not tell of severe beatings and torture as in Kikuyu-land, although some individuals seem to have suffered much during the operation immediately following the Kollowa Affray.⁷⁰ After all, DyM-suspects, except for Kollowa, had only committed the crime of unlawful assembly and conducting religious prayers in an illegal manner. This of course was different from Mau Mau, which no doubt was a violent uprising.⁷¹

Prison conditions, however, were harsh and often included hard labour. One prison at Kapsait (9000 feet above sea level), where inmates worked on the road to Kapsangar, was terribly cold. Unaccustomed to hard labour, chilly days and freezing nights, twelve prisoners died while serving there. The remaining prisoners were transferred to Kapenguria.⁷²

The officers in charge of the detention camps were white people, but the camps as such were run by Africans and inmates. The Rehabilitation Officer H.O. Grimley, serving at Kamatira, earned his reputation as a good man. A "good" officer was an officer who left the Pokot alone after collecting his taxes. The District Commissioner at the time, however, Adolph Shirreff (1954-59), was detested by the Pokot because of his "harsh" administration. Besides the Musambwa-clean-up operation Shirreff imposed fines on people who were felling

trees illegally (communal fine within one square kilometre), and ordered the slaughter of excess livestock. People fled to Uganda with their cattle to avoid this DC's policies.⁷³

Life in detention was easier than in prison. The detainees cared for themselves and had a reasonable amount of work. Weekends they were allowed to see their family, or family members were allowed to come and visit or even live with the inmates.

The Colonial Government considered the men to be the ringleaders.⁷⁴ Often the women, after questioning, were given lighter treatment, such as in the case of Cheriwoi. If behaving satisfactorily they were told to return home to take care of the children. Nevertheless, some were detained for quite a long time.⁷⁵ A woman called Cheposeron, arrested around 1956, was not released before 1960, although she was blind.⁷⁶

From Dini ya Musambwa to Dini ya Yomut

There was another wave of renewed DyM activity and subsequent arrests and trials in 1955 and 1957.⁷⁷ At that time, intelligence reports suggested the government must distinguish between DyM and Dini ya Yomut (DyY). To date, there are strong differences of opinion concerning the validity of such a distinction. Some, notably the present-day adherents of Lucas and the subsequent DyY, will strongly maintain that the intelligence was quite correct. They will say that Elijah Masinde's DyM is a Trans Nzoia-movement with a political agenda, while Lucas Pkiech and DyY is a purely Pokot religious phenomenon.⁷⁸ Others will claim that this is an afterthought; a deliberate change of the profile of a movement in order to make it more acceptable. According to these people DyM and DyY are one and the same, sharing the same roots while admittedly developing different strategies how to cope with the aftermath of Kollowa.⁷⁹

The DyY-interpretation is part of the alternative story of Lucas' first years as a preacher, as mentioned earlier. DyY-followers will claim one should not follow the government's interpretation of events that led to the Kollowa Affray. They assert that Lucas received the "yomat", the Spirit, at the waterfalls of Tartar. There he was told what to preach to the

Pokot. His message was religious, not political. When police tracked him down with his followers at Kollowa, Lucas was on his way to the governor to ask for permission to hold prayers as instructed by the Spirit.⁸⁰ Furthermore, at Kollowa the faithful were told by Lucas that bullets of Europeans would turn to water if they tried to attack the Pokot, so there was no need to worry about being hurt. If, however, the Pokot showed disrespect, the bullets would kill. At Kollowa hundreds, and maybe more than one-thousand people, were killed.⁸¹ The killing started when the Pokot refused to heed the warning shots fired by the colonial officer. After the first wave of attack, they claim a surviving white officer made his way back to their lorry and found both the vehicle and the machine gun intact. He then turned that automatic weapon on the remaining Pokot killing many of them.⁸² This interpretation certainly depicts Lucas as a peaceful prophet. The Kollowa-incident came about because of unruly elements of Lucas' followers who did not follow proper protocol.⁸³

After independence both DyM and DyY were declared proscribed societies, and the members operated underground. Prisoners were allowed to return home. Some were disillusioned and never re-joined the movement. Others carried on the vision of Lucas and assumed leadership, such as Rosti Lakuny who was able to leave Kollowa without being involved in the incident. Rosti gathered the scattered followers, but was later arrested and served one year at Sebit. Upon release, he continued to preach but was then jailed a second time – in Uganda. Rosti served a total of 12 years (with others) and did not return before 1972.⁸⁴

From Dini ya Yomut to Dini ya Roho ya Mafuta Pole ya Afrika (DRMPA)

Rosti was first chosen by Lucas to lead the followers and receive extended teachings about "... what God expected from those who shall inherit the Kingdom".⁸⁵ Rosti was initially unknown to the followers, but they were later informed of his arrival by the Spirit.⁸⁶ Rosti told them that Lucas had instructed him to start using the church name "Dini ya Roho ya Mafuta Pole ya Africa" (Religion of the Spirit of the Gentle Oil of Africa)

when the colonialists would finally leave Kenya.⁸⁷ Under Rosti's leadership, the followers gathered though some regretfully had rejoined DyM.⁸⁸ The leaders now claim there are doctrinal and ceremonial differences between DyM and DyY. According to these aforementioned leaders DyM only accepts the Old Testament and will not sing praise to Jehovah or Jesus, while DyY uses the whole Bible and sings praise to God and Jesus. Clothing was varied as well. While DyM was political, Lucas had a religious message to both black and white people. Despite many hardships and under the ever-watchful eye of suspicious local administrative authorities⁸⁹ they have developed their fellowship, built local churches,⁹⁰ and established a leadership structure and administration. Rosti died in 1997, and the present leader is Aristi Kapel.

Conclusion

Lucas Pkiech died at Kollowa, but his memory is still very much alive in Pokot society. DyM-people still honor him as a nationalist, a religious and political hero of Pokot resistance during colonial times. DRMPA-people see him as a tool; a misunderstood religious leader sent by God to lead the Pokot under the guidance of the Spirit. This brief sketch of events in Lucas' life shows that there is every reason to bring Lucas out of Elijah Masinde's shadow. Lucas' life and the movement after him must be interpreted on its own terms. It seems that he himself and the followers surrounding him were operating in quite a different religious and political context than that of Elijah and his fiery nationalism. Further research is definitely needed and encouraged.

The religious elements of the movement, i.e. partly traditional Pokot and partly Christianity-inspired, are the hardest to interpret. Lucas can fit into a religious leader/prophet- category as we know them from other parts of Kenya and Africa.⁹¹ His early demise, however, makes it difficult to connect Lucas and DRMPA directly. Perhaps it makes more sense to suggest that Lucas was a forerunner and inspiration-figure, especially after his violent death. This implies, then, that Rosti Lakony would be the actual founder and formative leader of DyY and present-day DRMPA. He was initially Lucas' assistant, briefly associated

with Kachute agitating along nationalistic lines, but cautioned Lucas and left Kollowa before the violence. Rosti's determined leadership in and out of prison gave the DyY a different trajectory than that of DyM - and much different than what one could have expected.

Initially we set the goal of presenting major facts in the life of Lucas, the fate of some of his followers and certain developments within the movement after Lucas' death. We have followed Lucas on his fateful preaching tour to East Baringo where he was killed together with many of his followers. Hundreds of other followers were jailed. Today two groups consider Lucas as their founding father. It seems to us that Lucas was motivated by local needs, fuelled by traditional and Christian ideas, as well as, but probably secondarily, political and nationalistic ideas picked up from DyM and Elijah Masinde. Understanding Lucas Pkiech, the Kollowa Affray and the subsequent events seems to us much more challenging than earlier research has suggested. Colonial Pokot was a complex social, political and religious context which allowed for various outcomes in a fluid situation. Rosti Lakuny assumed leadership and charted a religious course for parts of the movement. Others refused to follow his lead and have instead emphasized the political aspects – to this day. But to all of them Lucas Pkiech is a hero – who is part political rebel, part spiritual leader.

Noter

- ¹ David Anderson, *Histories of the banged. Britain's dirty war in Kenya and the end of empire*. (London: Phoenix, 2005); Caroline Elkins, *Britain's Gulag. The brutal end of empire in Kenya*. (London: Pimlico 2005). The events in Pokot took place two years before the Mau Mau rebellion started in Central Province. In Pokot one could see on a small scale what was developed large scale later to deal with the Mau Mau insurgency.
- ² Several historians have written about Dini ya Musambwa. The most extensive study is done by Audrey Wipper, *Rural rebels. A study of two protestant movements in Kenya*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1977). Her interpretation of events has generated a lot of discussion; see Erling Lundebj, «Rebel movement or emerging church? Revisiting Dini ya Musambwa and Dini ya Yomut in Western Kenya» in *Videre med*

- evangeliet. Festskrift til misjonslederen Egil Grandbagen.* H.Aa. Gravaas, T.E. Hamre og A. Redse (red). (Trondheim: Tapir forlag 2012), 277-290.
- ³ Bengt Sundkler, (1961): *Bantu prophets in Africa*. 2nd ed. Oxford: International African Institute, and Bengt Sundkler, *Zulu Zion*. (Lund: Gleerups.1976)
- ⁴ David Barrett, *Schism and renewal in Africa. An analysis of six thousand contemporary movements*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1968) and David Barrett, "Interdisciplinary theories of religion and African independency." in *African Initiatives in Religion*, D. Barrett (ed.). (Nairobi: East African Publishing House 1971), 146-159.
- ⁵ Allan H. Anderson, *Zion and Pentecost. The spirituality and experience of Pentecostal and Zionist/Apostolic churches in South Africa*. (Pretoria: University of South Africa Press 2000) and Allen H. Anderson, *African reformation. African initiated Christianity in the 20th century*. (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press 2001).
- ⁶ Kenneth Ingham, *A history of East Africa*. (London: Longmans 1965), 172ff.
- ⁷ John Russel, *Kenya, beyond the Marich pass. A District Officer's story*. (London: The Radcliffe Press 1994) is the personal story of a former District Officer who served in West Pokot in the 1950's.
- ⁸ See Anette & Lawrie Totty, *Sounding the Call. 50 years of sharing the Gospel of Christ in Pokot*. (Stenciled manuscript Totty 1981) and Peter S.V. Cox, *Bring your medicine if you like*. (Leeds: E. Cox, Oaklea Hse 2000). Totty was Anglican missionary throughout the period described in this article. Dr. Cox was a medical missionary to Uganda and Kenya from 1957.
- ⁹ Ken Phillips, *Tom Collins of Kenya. Son of Valour*. (London: Africa Inland Mission 1965) tells the story of AIM pioneer Tom Collins in East Pokot.
- ¹⁰ Ingham (1965), 403ff and William, B. Anderson, *The Church in East Africa, 1840-1974*. (Dodoma: Central Tanganyika Press 1977), 108ff.
- ¹¹ In the following I shall rely mainly on the facts given in the official report of the commission of 1950, i.e.: *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Affray at Kolloa, Baringo*. (Nairobi: Government printer, 1950).
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- ¹² Lucas used to make ceremonial jingles and animal's bells, John Talatum, *Taped interview*. Feb. 20th, 2010 DM200021-22.
- ¹³ Alimon Loshangura Ameme , *Taped interview*. Feb. 20th, 2010 DM200021-22 (Ameme 2010b):1.
- ¹⁴ Wipper 1977:336-338.
- ¹⁵ *The Report* says that Lucas "fell in with Elijah" (p. 4). This can hardly mean that Lucas met Elijah in person since Elijah at this time was well secured in Mathari Mental Hospital in Nairobi, March 1945 - May 1947, Wipper 1977: 338.

- ¹⁶ Benjamin E. Kipkorir, «Colonial response to crisis - the Kolloa Affray and colonial Kenya in 1950.» in *Kenya Past and Present*, (1973), 2 (1), 22-35. [p.24].
- ¹⁷ Members of the Dini ya Roho ya Mafuta Pole ya Afrika (DRMPA).
- ¹⁸ John Talatum, *Taped interview*, Feb. 3rd, 2010. DM 200011-12, (Talatum 2010a):1. John Kinyang Talatum is the general secretary of DRMPA.
- ¹⁹ Talatum claims Lucas' name appear first in the Tartar baptism registry, but that seems not to be the case. Tartar Catholic Mission was established in 1942. The first entries are from 1949. Catholic priests based in Kitale started to visit Pokot and Kapenguria in the 1930's. It might well be that Lucas was an early Catholic convert, but this author has not yet been able to verify if that indeed is the case. Talatum in Timothy Ng'imor, *Taped interview*, Feb. 3rd, 2010. DM 200016, (Ng'imor 2010):14.05.
- ²⁰ Mediation = to be filled with the strength and honor to preach. "*kujazwa nguvu na bekima ya kububiri*", John Talatum, *Taped interview*, Feb. 3rd, 2010. DM 200015, (Talatum 2010b):1.
- ²¹ Aristi Kapel, *Taped interview*, Feb. 3rd, 2010. DM 200013-4, (Kapel 2010):1. Aristi Kapel is the present chairman of DRMPA.
- ²² At this early stage Lucas preached in Keringet, Serewo, Kanyarkwat and Mnagei, Talatum 2010a:1.
- ²³ Talatum says the first arrest occurred in 1948, but most likely 1947 (or earlier, 1942?) is more correct. Official records show arrest and conviction to take place in 1948. Lucas' fingerprints were obtained several times, i.e. when he enrolled at Kabete in 1934, in connection with a sentence for assault in 1942, in prison 1948, and during post mortem examination in 1950, Report 1950:14.
- ²⁴ Talatum 2010a:1. On his second trip he visited Chepareria, Muruny, Mwino, Kollosia, Cherangany and Trans-Nzoia.
- ²⁵ Some brought charges of gross sexual immorality in the meetings, Wipper 1977:207, footnote 179, accusations that have continued even to this day. Lucas' present followers strongly deny this and will adhere to strict moral codes in matters sexual. Kapel and Talatum in Ng'imor 2010:16.10. Quite the opposite, in case somebody was contemplating an immoral act, the Spirit could warn that person through prophecy not to proceed. Kapel in Ng'imor 2010:17.28.
- ²⁶ Wipper 1977:339.
- ²⁷ Report 1950:4.
- ²⁸ Report 1950:15.
- ²⁹ Talatum 2010a:1.
- ³⁰ Report 1950:15.
- ³¹ The following is built on the testimony of Kachute, see Report 1950:15 and Pius Kachute, *Taped interview*, Feb. 20th, 2010. DM 200063 (Kachute 2010):0.47. Lucas passed through Kambi ya Moto, Rongai, Molo, Eldoret and Hoey's Bridge. From Molo on he travelled with Kachute.
- ³² Also known as Atotom. Talatum 2010a:1.
- ³³ Alimon Loshangura Ameme, *Taped interview* on Feb. 20th, 2010. DM 200020, (Ameme 2010a):1.

- ³⁴ Sons of Lucas, *Taped interview*, Feb. 20th, 2010. DM 200023 (Sons of Lucas 2010):1. The “sons of Lucas” are children born to the two widows after Lucas’ death.
- ³⁵ Instead of arresting Lucas the chief slaughtered an ox in Lucas’ honor. Ameme 2010a:1.10.
- ³⁶ Rosti was from Kasauria village, Alale division. Ameme 2010a:1.
- ³⁷ Ameme 2010a:3.28. “*Mpaka Kachute akaambia mzungu siku hiyo: Ninyi tutabama, bata kama mnaua mimi. Ninyi mtabama nchi hii!*” (Eng. transl: “... it reached a point where Kachute told the European that day: You will leave, even if you kill me. You will leave this country!”)
- ³⁸ The three are Ramson, Pangelil Lotome and Lokomol. Ameme 2010a:4.10.
- ³⁹ Chemosop testified before the commission, Report 1950:15.
- ⁴⁰ Report 1950: 20. Lucas blew his cover writing a letter to a trader friend who was under surveillance because he had received letters from Lucas before, Ameme 2010a:1.40. Lucas was actually spotted in Keringet in October. Agricultural officer D.C. Rennie reported this to the District Commissioner, but the DC could not later recall that he ever received such information, Report 1950:19.
- ⁴¹ Reuben Moteluk Longarimoi, *Taped interview*, Feb. 20th, 2010. DM 200062, (Longarimoi 2010):4.35. A man called Musion as well joined them, and they had meetings in the compounds of Lukureng, Lokichu na Limareng, Longarimoi 2010:10.50.
- ⁴² “Zion” is an ambiguous term. Some take it as meaning Mt. Elgon, in line with the message of Elijah Masinde, and having a nationalistic/political connotation. Others take it as a religious term meaning ushering in the promised glorious time when Lucas’ prophecies of prosperity would be fulfilled, Report 1950:4.
- ⁴³ William Lopetakou, *Taped, structured interview*, Jan. 16th, 2009. Cassette-format, (Lopetakou 2009):18.
- ⁴⁴ Kapel 2010:1. They stayed with Rono between Lomut and Mwino, proceeded to Chesimoto at Cheptulel, to Mugar down near the river Kerio, to Nginyang and finally to Korossi in East Baringo.
- ⁴⁵ The Report says “Reversion to primitive customs”, Report 1950:4.
- ⁴⁶ Part of this is confirmed in interviews: “*Lucas said: Sasa, tikiungana kabisa sisi kwa sisi, balafu mpaka hii maneno ya dini ya kanisa, yote hii manyimbo, yote tusikizane yote, basi, Mungu atateremka na kukuja kutuponyesha! Yaani, maneno mingi alitueleza mpaka watu wale viwete, wale bakuna macho, wale kilema, watu walifurahi wakisema: tukienda na buyu mtu tutaenda kupata nini? Kupata ubai.*” (transl: Lucas said: Now, if we really remain united, that is, what concerns this church-thing, about these songs, if we listen to it all, then God will come down to us and heal us! That is, in many words he explained to us so that the blind, the crippled were very happy and said: If we go along with him, what shall we receive? We shall receive life (healing).”) Longarimoi 2010:26.35.
- ⁴⁷ “*Siendi na watu wa uwoga! Nataka niende na watu wale shujaa, yaani, sasa ni wakati yangu kutoka hapa nitaenda straight mpaka kwa polisi, kesho! Kwa hivyo sitaki watu waoga, na sitaki mtu mwoga anifuata!*”

- (transl: I do not want to go with people who are afraid! I want to go with the courageous ones, now is my time to leave, I shall go straight to the police tomorrow! Therefore, I don't want cowards, and I don't want to be followed by people who are afraid!) Longarimoi 2010:29.43.
- 48 Barbara A. Bianco, "Songs of Mobility in West Pokot." in *American Ethnologist*, (1996), 23 (1), 25-42. [p.25].
- 49 Talatum claims Lucas taught more than 8000 followers, Talatum 2010a:8.08. The leaders were Rosti Lakuny, Ramson Yeliyel, Aduywan Chomil and Kachute Lakimoi (Anakimoi).
- 50 Rosti remained a fugitive until 1957, but was then jailed in Uganda.
- 51 Talatum 2010a:8.08, Kachute 2010:4.45 (Pius Kachute is Kachute Lakimoi's son, aged 3 when his father disappeared). Kachute Lakimoi testified before the commission, Report1950:15.
- 52 Ameme 2010a:4.45.
- 53 Ameme 2010a:6.15.
- 54 Longarimoi 2010:43.13. Longarimoi was at Kollowa observing the shooting from a nearby hill. He was slightly wounded in the leg, but managed to reach home undetected. Longarimoi 2010:51.00.
- 55 Tom Collins of the Africa Inland Mission was stationed at Ng'inyang. He spoke Pokot fluently and picked up the rumours of Lucas' whereabouts. He checked out the group and even talked to Lucas. The songs were quite antagonistic to white people and Christianity, and Collins was alarmed when neighbors joined the singing, Report 1950:7. Lucas' followers admit there was a conversation between Collins and Lucas that turned negative, but Lucas never, according to them, intended to harm Collins or rise up in arms against the government, see Kapel in Ng'imor 2010:9.20.
- 56 In a taped interview in 2009 one of the Tribal Police, Mr. Akuom Chumar, claims TPs turned against their own officers, Akuom Chumar, *Taped interview*, 2009. Cassette-format (Chumar 2009):1. He was later accused and arrested, but denied all charges and was eventually sent home. This author has not been able to verify this information.
- 57 Report 1950:14.
- 58 Concerns voiced by Siwareng Ameme and Aristi Kapel, Talatum 2010b:11.30, 12.05.
- 59 Sons of Lucas 2010:1. Lucas' widows and the children have not received any word of apology nor compensation from the British government ever. Some have suggested that as a conciliatory gesture the British High Commission could build a school in memory of Lucas Pkiech – which his followers find quite acceptable . John Talatum, *Taped interview*. Feb. 20th, 2010 DM200021-22.
- 60 Siwareng Ameme related that Lucas' dead body was placed on a truck, but was taken away by a strong wind in which there was a horse, Ng'imor 2010:1.25, and Cheptoyo Lusite, *Taped interview*, 2009. Cassette-format. (Lusite 2009):1-2.
- 61 Lydia Losili, *Taped interview*, Feb. 3rd, 2009. Cassette-format, (Losili 2009):1, and Paul Alipar Kiralem, *Notes from interview with former*

Administration Police, Mr. Paulu Alipar Kiralem, Jan. 26th, 2009. (Kiralem 2009):3.

⁶² Seven were actually hanged; the rest had their sentences commuted. Rengei Lopanga was arrested with bullet wounds, but escaped death by hanging because of his young age. He served nine years in prison, some in Kamiti Maximum Security Prison where he cleaned the hanging house. Rengei Lopanga, *Taped interview*, 2009. Cassette-format (Lopanga 2009):1.

⁶³ Talatum 2010b:8.35. Kollowa-prisoners were held in e.g. Nakuru, Isiolo, Wajir and Maralal.

⁶⁴ Kiralem 2009:2.

⁶⁵ Talatum 2010b:1.50. Chumar spent time in prison with Lokichu, Chemosop and Cheriwoi. Chumar claims Chemosop was raped and became pregnant in prison, Chumar 2009:2.

⁶⁶ Kiralem 2009:2.

⁶⁷ Jackson K. Katina, *Notes from interview with former Clerk to County Council, Mr. Jackson Katina*, Jan. 14th, 2009, (Katina 2009):1.

⁶⁸ Lopetakou 2009:1

⁶⁹ Rionoripo Akudunyang, *Taped interview*, 2009. Cassette-format, (Akudunyang 2009):1.

⁷⁰ Kiralem 2009:3, Akudunyang 2009:4.

⁷¹ The administration was very apprehensive as to what DyM in Trans Nzoia might be capable of doing, and they considered DyM a larger threat to the colony than Mau Mau, see Audrey Wipper, "Lofty visions and militant action. A reply to Jan de Wolf." in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, (1983), 17 (2),. 277-294 [p.289]. Researchers are divided as to the violent character of DyM depending on the interpretation of events in Trans-Nzoia in 1948-50, see Lundebay 2012:285. A violent up-rising in Pokot was unexpected.

⁷² Lopetakou 2009:1.

⁷³ Lopetakou 2009:3. Mr. D.R. Crampton, one the first DCs, was admired as a great friend of Pokot. When the Colonial Government made a punitive expedition to disarm the Turkana around 1914, he used the Pokot as soldiers and gave them the cattle that were confiscated. The Pokot gave him a wife in return.

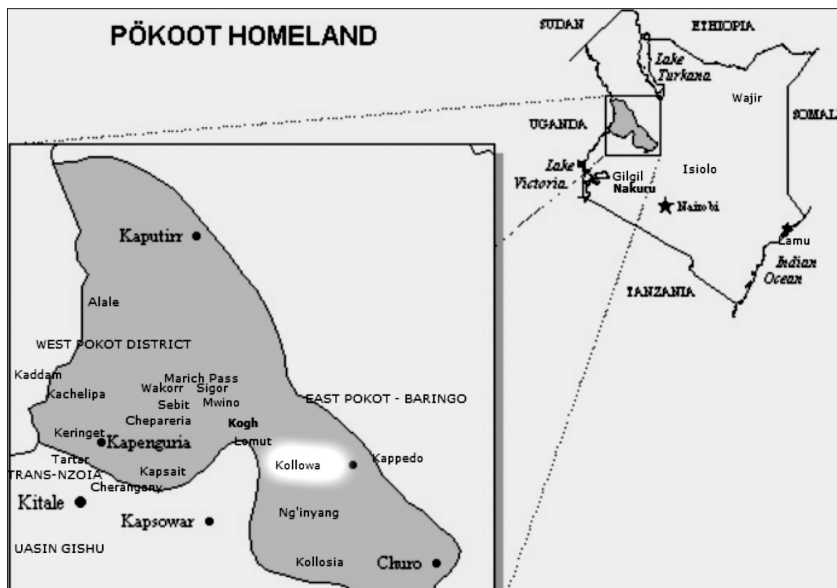
⁷⁴ Chemosop, however, was tracked down and arrested but died in police custody. Cheptoyo Lusite of Ng'inyang was also a woman leader of quite some responsibility. She and her family hosted Lucas for several days and observed closely the events leading up to Kollowa. She claims Lucas had a political agenda without telling them openly. Lusite and family were heavily fined, but did not serve in prison. Lusite 2009:3.

⁷⁵ Lydia Losili joined Lucas and his company as they passed through Mwino. She did not follow all the way to Kollowa and returned home with a friend. Nevertheless she was arrested and detained in April 1950, brought to Kapenguria and later Kitale. She was convicted in 1951. She observed much violence in prison, but was herself not beaten except when counted. Lydia became very disillusioned with Lucas and the many unfulfilled

- promises. Upon her release she left the movement altogether. Losili 2009:2.
- ⁷⁶ Lopetakou 2009:2
- ⁷⁷ See *Annual Report of the District Commissioner, 1957*. Kenya National Archives, West Pokot District, DC/WP/1/8. (KNA 1957):2.
- ⁷⁸ Lopetakou 2009:2, Talatum 2010b:2.20, 3.55.
- ⁷⁹ “*There is no difference between Musambwa, Yomat and Dini ya Mafuta Pole. In Trans-Nzoia it was called Musambwa, and it arrived in Pokot land as Musambwa or Yomat. Later it was converted to Dini y Mafuta Pole. After independence not many changes were experienced apart from chasing the white man. Songs and prophecies remained the same up to today... The movement became like a political wing to chase the white man out of the country to allow black men to rule themselves...*” Akudonyang 2010:4-5. Akudonyang was a DyY-member from 1954, was arrested in 1956 and spent three years in prison in Kapenguria, Sigor and Kamatira. When released he left the movement and joined a regular church.
- ⁸⁰ Longarimoi claims Lucas wanted to visit Kenyatta at Gatundu, but was refused a travel pass from the chiefs. Longarimoi 2010:23.52.
- ⁸¹ The numbers here are most likely exaggerated for want of accurate figures. The official count was that Lucas was surrounded by roughly 500 men initially. Those who clashed with the police contingent were about 250-300. 20 were killed immediately, among them Lucas, and were abandoned on the field together with about 20 wounded. Many escaped, and one does not know how many of these were critically wounded. See Report 1950:10-11, and “Official story of Baringo. ‘Generally agreed’ facts. Government tells of steps taken to meet the situation.” in *East African Standard*, May 10, 1950. (EA Standard 1950):2.
- ⁸² Lopetakou 2009:2.
- ⁸³ That not all Pokot were ready for attack is shown by the fact that several spears were recovered afterwards which still had the protective leather sheathing on, Report 1950:14. The Commission “... do not know quite what to make of it.”
- ⁸⁴ They served two years inside jail and 10 years outside. In 1972 they were allowed to return home, Talatum 2010b:9.35, Talatum 2010a:8.08.
- ⁸⁵ Talatum 2010a:10.30.
- ⁸⁶ Lucas’ followers claim they received guidance by the Spirit in all major questions, even practical ones, e.g. where to build a church, how to build a church, the giving of names etc. The early believers were utterly dependant on the Spirit, because the Bible was not available to them. Talatum in Ng’imor 2010:4.05.
- ⁸⁷ Kapel 2010:1, Talatum 2010b:2.20.
- ⁸⁸ Example: Jeruwe and Prono were two early followers of Lucas who, due to the intense pressure, denied ever having been in contact with him. Thereby they escaped any form of punishment. Later they joined DyM. John Talatum, *Taped interview*. Feb. 20th, 2010 DM200017:1.
- ⁸⁹ Kapel tells how in the early 1960’s they still met in caves and deep forests, returning very early in the morning to avoid detection, Kapel 2010:1.

⁹⁰ Local churches are called *boma* and the headquarters are called *Zion*, Kapel in Talatum 2010b:6.05.

⁹¹ Following Barrett (1971:146ff) and Bianco (1996).



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Erling Lundebj, b. 1952. Fjellhaug Mission Seminary 1977, cand. theol. MF Norwegian School of Theology, Oslo, 1982, Th.M. in Missiology, Fuller School of World Mission, Pasadena, 1993. Asst. prof. Fjellhaug International University College 1997-. Chief archivist Norwegian Lutheran Mission 2013-. Served in Kenya with Norwegian Lutheran Mission and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya, 1977-1995, 2003-2005. Published articles on church and mission history in East Africa.