

# United Nations GENERAL ASSEMBLY

EIGHTEENTH SESSION

Official Records



FOURTH COMMITTEE, 1496th  
MEETING

Monday, 2 December 1963,  
at 10.50 a.m.

NEW YORK

## CONTENTS

	Page
Question concerning agenda item 52 . . . . .	437
Agenda item 78:	
Question of Oman ( <i>continued</i> )	
Hearing of petitioners ( <i>continued</i> ) . . . . .	437
Agenda item 55:	
Question of South West Africa ( <i>continued</i> ) . . .	444

Chairman: Mr. ACHKAR Marof (Guinea).

### Question concerning agenda item 52

1. Mr. COOMARASWAMY (Ceylon) noted that the next item that the Committee was to take up was the question of the continuation of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories (agenda item 52). In that connexion he drew attention to resolution 1847 (XVII) adopted by the General Assembly at the previous session, and in particular to operative paragraph 2 of that resolution.

2. He thought it would be useful for the Committee to know whether, in the opinion of the Secretary-General, the continuation of the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories would result in any overlapping of responsibilities or duplication of work in any field whatever.

3. The CHAIRMAN said that he took note of the Ceylonese representative's question, to which an answer would be provided in due course.

### AGENDA ITEM 78

Question of Oman (A/5492 and Add.1, A/5562, A/C.4/604 and Add.1 and 2, A/C.4/619) (*continued*)

### HEARING OF PETITIONERS (*continued*)

At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Faris Glubb, representative of the Committee for the Rights of Oman, Sheikh Talib bin Ali al-Hani took places at the Committee table.

4. Mr. GLUBB (Committee for the Rights of Oman) thanked the Fourth Committee, on behalf of the Committee he represented, for granting him the honour of a hearing.

5. He went on to offer the people of the United States the most sincere condolences of the Committee on the Rights of Oman, whose members united in deploring the death of President Kennedy.

6. In previous debates on the question of Oman in the Special Political Committee,<sup>1/</sup> many speakers

had said that the question was a complex one and that the United Nations required the fullest information on the subject. Moreover, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Mr. de Ribbing, had said in his report (A/5562) that many aspects of the problem required detailed study by competent experts. That was the task that the Committee for the Rights of Oman had set itself. For almost two years the Committee had had a team of scholars specializing in Arab affairs, Omani constitutional law, Middle Eastern history and international law, who had conducted an extensive research into the problem of Oman. Where doubtful points had arisen, the Committee had consulted distinguished experts in those fields, such as doctors and professors at United Kingdom universities, to obtain a private and independent point of view. Before that research project had begun, he had visited the northern Oman coast in order to obtain first-hand information, but unfortunately his attempts to visit Muscat and the interior had been prevented by the occupation authorities. Despite that, he had been able to obtain considerable information from several sources on both sides of the conflict.

7. The research team had concentrated particularly on the constitutional law of Oman and the institution of the Imamate, in order to assess the validity of the claims of the Imam and the Government of Oman, who had been driven out of their country by the British invasion. At the previous session the United Kingdom representative in the Special Political Committee had quoted Nuraddin Abdullah Ibn Hamid Al Salimi, an Omani statesman who had lived in the early twentieth century and who was universally recognized as the greatest authority on Omani law and history. Salimi, whose views had apparently been accepted by the United Kingdom representative, had outlined the basic principles of Omani constitutional law in his work entitled *Jawhar Al Nidham, Kitab Nidham Al 'Alam*. Those principles, and the way in which Salimi expressed them, were indicative of the high standard of public responsibility and the consideration of the rights and will of the people which characterized the Omani theory of government. According to Salimi, the criterion by which a State could be judged to be healthy or unhealthy, democratic or dictatorial, was justice; justice, he claimed, was the foundation of the State, while tyranny was a destructive factor. Regarding the methods whereby those principles could be applied, Salimi said that they must take account of the will of the community as a whole and, in order that the will of the people might be effectively expressed, the people must elect their Head of State.

8. In the system advocated by Salimi, the people met in council, presided over by an Imam, the elected leader, who followed a policy of justice to those he administered, after the example of Abu Bakr and Umar, the first Caliphs, or Heads of the Moslem State. The mention of those men, who were always held up as examples of honest and enlightened government, showed

<sup>1/</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifteenth Session, Special Political Committee, 255th-259th meetings; ibid., Sixteenth Session, Special Political Committee, 299th-306th meetings; and ibid., Seventeenth Session, Special Political Committee, 351st-357th meetings.*

the Islamic ethics of Omani constitutional law. Salimi gave an outline of the procedure for the election of an Imam and the members of his advisory council, whom it was obligatory for the people to elect.

9. The United Kingdom representative in the Special Political Committee had stated that it was not compulsory that an Imam should rule in Oman if no suitable person could be found to fill the office. What Salimi said on that subject was that if the Imam died and another was elected to succeed him, an investigation was necessary in order to ensure that the new Imam would not tyrannize over the people, and that if the matter was in doubt it was not compulsory that a new Imam should be elected. That was tantamount to saying that it was safer to have no Imam at all than to have a bad one. That problem, however, did not arise in Oman at the present time, for there was a lawful Imam, who fulfilled his obligations towards his people to the best of his ability.

10. Furthermore, there had been no interregnum since 1913 and the interregna of 1820-1868 and 1871-1913 had been caused less by lack of suitable leaders than by the chaos in the country resulting from continuous aggression and interference by the United Kingdom Government, which, having exerted its efforts to destroy the Omani system of enlightened government, now blamed the Omani people for any failures that ensued.

11. In addition, a vital aspect of Omani political thought, namely the continuous validity of the Imamate, should be taken into consideration. Although there had been interregna, the leadership of the country by an Imam had always been the normal state of affairs in Oman; without an Imam the community was incomplete. The Imamate could never be surrendered to a tyrant. To illustrate that point, Salimi cited the case of Julanda Ibn Mus'ud, the first Imam, whom the Council, representing the will of the people of Oman, had forbidden to surrender the ring and sword, symbols of his office, to the Abbasids of Baghdad, stating that the ring and sword were for posterity and could not be inherited. If the Imamate was forbidden to surrender to the Abbasids, who were of the same race as the Omanis, how much more must it refuse to submit to the dictation of the United Kingdom Government, which was seeking to impose an alien tyranny on Oman.

12. The democratic nature of the Imamate was well illustrated by the rule that the Imam was required to consult the people's representatives and the advisory council on all important matters and by the fact that consultation had been laid down as an essential in the oath of office of the Imam elected in 1868. Furthermore, popular control was effectively exercised in that the Imam could be removed from office if he misused his position, for example if he refused to heed the advice of the advisory council. It was interesting to note that misrule by the Imam was called "rebellious", for under Omani law the people were the ultimate sovereign authority and the Imam was their servant and derived his position from their consent. Salimi stated that in the case of misrule everyone able to do so must ensure the Imam's removal from office if he did not repent and if his rule was that of a tyrant.

13. In paragraph 5 of his report (A/5562), Mr. de Ribbing stated that the Imam was primarily a religious figure but that he had often assumed secular power. That was not altogether accurate. The word "imam" in Arabic meant simply a leader of any type, in any sphere of activity, and the confusion in the minds of

non-Moslems probably arose from the fact that the man who led prayers in a mosque was called an imam. The religious role of the Imam of Oman was only one of his functions; there was no doubt that his most important task was a secular one. He presided over the Council, Oman's supreme executive body, and, as the British authority Mr. Wilfred Thesiger had stated, was responsible for internal security, justice and taxation. In fact, he was the Head of both Church and State, as was the Queen of England and as the old Moslem Caliphs had been. In that respect his role was comparable to that of the King of Morocco or the King of Saudi Arabia. That point was confirmed by the fact that the founder of the Ibadi group, Abdullah Ibn Ibad, had never been considered the Imam of Oman, since he had possessed no *de facto* secular powers. The first Imam of Oman had been Julanda Ibn Mus'ud, beyond question a secular ruler.

14. The United Kingdom representative in the Special Political Committee had said that the founder of the present Al Bu Said dynasty, Ahmed bin Said, had been elected Imam and that his son Said had followed him in that capacity in 1783. That statement gave an erroneous impression of primogeniture. In fact, Said had not been Ahmed's eldest son and he had been formally elected. The fact that many people had disagreed with his election was an indication of Oman's democratic spirit. Salimi referred to him as a "Sultan", thereby implying that his rule was illegal, for in Ibadi terminology a Sultan was a ruler whose authority did not emanate from the popular will and was therefore unconstitutional or tyrannical.

15. The United Kingdom representative had claimed that Said had been instrumental in making a definite separation between his spiritual functions and his temporal power, the latter being transferred to his own son Hamad, who had become Sultan of Muscat and Oman, residing in Muscat. That interpretation of events was nonsensical, for that type of separation did not exist in Islam and the ruler in power applied Moslem law as defined by the Koran. What had in fact happened had been that Said had delegated his powers in all fields to his son Hamad as regent, a situation that had constitutional precedents in the history of Oman. In the early ninth century a regent had been appointed when the Imam, through ill health, had been unable to bear the whole burden of his office. Similarly, in the eighteenth century Sayf Ibn Sultan had appointed Ahmed bin Said as his regent. Salimi, referring to Ahmed, said that Sayf had entrusted the government and the exercise of power and authority to him and had delegated all matters to him. It was worth noting that Ahmed had not become Head of State until some twenty years later and that another Imam had preceded him after Sayf.

16. Thus the theory of the separation of powers advanced by the United Kingdom representative was nonsensical and would not withstand historical examination. In any event, if there had been such a separation it would be mentioned in the works of the Omani historians. Yet neither Salimi nor Ibn Razik, the Sultan's official historian, made any mention of a separation of religious and secular functions; they merely referred to Said's delegation of authority to his son as a conventional regency with precedents in the history of Oman. Indeed, Hamad had only exercised authority in his father's name and the latter had remained Head of State. The proof was that when during the regency a rebellion had broken out in Nazwa, Said had taken upon himself to suppress it, ordering some people to

be arrested. Moreover, an appeal for an amnesty had been addressed to Said as Head of State, and not to his son. Those facts proved that ultimate secular authority had remained in Said's hands.

17. The United Kingdom representative had stated that the office of Imam had not been in continuous existence. There had admittedly been interregna from 1821 to 1868 and from 1871 to 1913, but that was irrelevant to the legality of the Imamate. Similarly it could be pointed out that from 1868 to 1871 there had been no Sultan of Muscat, after the expulsion of the Sultan Salim bin Thuwaini by the Imam Azzan bin Qais. The most important facts were that the Imamate had been continuous since 1913, that it had been the form of government of Oman throughout the greater part of its history and that it was the rightful form of government according to the country's constitutional law and the will of its people.

18. As an Englishman, he could only express shame and sorrow that his country had so far betrayed its traditions as to invade a defenceless nation, destroying its democratic Government and imposing on its people a despotic colonial rule reinforced by a reign of terror. He used the word "colonial" without hesitation, since the United Kingdom Government had erected a mere façade of independence around the Sultan's régime. He trusted that the members of the Committee would not be deceived by outward appearances.

19. The Sultan, by the very nature of his unpopular rule, was utterly dependent on United Kingdom help and was incapable of applying a policy of his own. As Captain G. I. Eccles, a British officer who had served in the Sultan's army, had said, there was little doubt that but for British support the dynasty of the Al Bu Said would have ceased to exist. Captain Eccles had added that by undertaking to protect the Sultan and his heirs the United Kingdom had committed itself to the hereditary principle, which was foreign to Ibadî sentiment, especially when forced on the country by a foreign and infidel Power. Captain Eccles had concluded that the United Kingdom's support of the present dynasty against the whole of Omani popular opinion was destroying any hope of the country's being united under one strong man.

20. Many treaties had been signed between the Sultan and the United Kingdom Government which severely limited the Sultan's sovereignty and in effect denied his existence as an independent ruler. He would deal only with agreements which were still binding and had not been abrogated or replaced. In 1890, as stated in paragraph 161 of the report (A/5562) of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. de Ribbing, the Sultan had undertaken to be guided in all matters of policy by the advice of the United Kingdom Government. Thenceforward his independence had been a pure fiction. In 1922 the Sultan had promised not to exploit any petroleum which might be found anywhere within his territories and not to grant permission for its exploitation without consulting the Political Agent at Muscat and without the approval of the Government of India, then under British control. Thus he had placed his territory's internal resources at the disposal of the United Kingdom Government. The United Kingdom Government declared that it did not consider the agreement to be binding, but if that were so there seemed to be no point in making such an agreement.

21. The treaty of 1939, which had been replaced by that of 1951, had seriously limited the Sultan's sovereignty by giving the United Kingdom Consul extra-

territorial jurisdiction over British citizens in Muscat in matters of criminal and civil law, bankruptcy, inheritance and the personal status of non-Moslems. Mr. Richard Young, writing in the American Journal of International Law, expressed the view that the privileged position of British citizens was substantially unchanged, while some Commonwealth citizens had a less favoured position. It was generally agreed by distinguished authorities in international law that capitulations represented a limitation on a country's sovereignty.

22. In addition, there were a number of other aspects of the Sultan's relations with the United Kingdom Government which had the practical effect of further limiting the Sultan's control of his policy, and therefore his sovereignty. The post of Secretary for Defence was held by an Englishman and the Sultan had a British Adviser who also acted as Minister for Foreign Affairs. At the same time the Sultan claimed that he made all decisions himself and that the British had nothing to do with his policy-making. If the Adviser was there to give advice which the Sultan had pledged himself to follow, it was most unlikely that the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary for Defence had nothing to do with policy-making. The Sultan's profession of independence was singularly unconvincing.

23. Closely linked with that question was the nature of the Sultan's army. It was under a British Secretary for Defence and virtually all the officers were foreigners, the highest rank open to a Muscati being second lieutenant. Even more important, the bulk of men serving in even the lowest ranks were mercenaries of foreign origin, and the Committee for the Rights of Oman had learned from two independent sources that the occupation authorities were recruiting the services of ex-Katanga mercenaries to serve in repressing Oman. He had not been able to confirm that beyond doubt, but it had the ring of truth. It was known that the Sultan was trying to recruit 2,000 mercenaries to add to his present army of over 2,300. The Secretary-General's Special Representative had been misinformed by the occupation authorities, who had told him that the proposed future strength of the army was only 2,480. In any event, an army led entirely by foreign officers above the rank of second lieutenant, composed largely of foreign mercenaries and subservient to the dictates of the British Secretary for Defence, could only be regarded as an occupation army.

24. The United Kingdom representative had stated in the Special Political Committee that claims of continuing aggression by British combatant troop units permanently staying in the area and of military bases had no foundation. That was plainly untrue. The 1958 agreement between the Sultan and the United Kingdom Government allowed the Royal Air Force facilities at Salalah and Masirah, where there were British bases. There was also a very large British military base at Sharjah, which, although administered as a separate unit by the occupation forces, was historically part of Oman. The United Kingdom representative could not deny the existence of those bases.

25. In addition to the regular British forces, there was a local British-officered army of mercenaries, the Trucial Oman Scouts, in accordance with the treaty. He had in his possession, for the information of the members of the Committee, a pamphlet distributed by the Scouts in which rewards were offered to anyone

who would enable freedom fighters to be captured or arms to be seized. It was a translation of an original document and not a photostat copy. The Scouts were stationed on the North Oman Coast and since the beginning of August had been engaged in fiercely suppressing the Shihuh tribe, near Ras al Khaimah.

26. Lord Curzon had once said that Muscat could be justifiably regarded as a British dependency, since the United Kingdom subsidized its ruler, dictated its policy and would tolerate no alien interference in the country. All those conditions still existed, with the addition of what could only be termed an army of occupation which had brutally attempted to impose the will of the United Kingdom Government on the Omani people. That Government had planned the invasion of Oman even before the Second World War. The United Kingdom Government's first step in its present policy had been to depose the Sultan Taimur and install his son, the present ruler, because he was more amenable to its annexation policy. Thus the United Kingdom Government had installed that Sultan by its own command and it was now maintaining that he was an independent ruler.

27. Mr. Edwards, the Chairman of the Committee for the Rights of Oman, had submitted a memorandum (A/C.4/604/Add.1) which contained many facts concerning the brutality of the occupation authorities in Oman, but they continued in their acts, unconcerned by world opinion. At the end of August eight Omanis had died under torture in Muscat prison. Even now a distinguished freedom fighter, Zahir al Nabhani, was being held without trial and interrogated under torture, if, indeed, he had not already died. The great scholar Al Rugayshi had been under detention for years simply because his views on constitutional law differed from those of the Sultan. Other distinguished Omanis, notably Sultan Ibn Sulaiman Ibn Himyar, Mahmud Ibn Zahir and Ahmad Ibn Abdullah, were in prison for their political views. Mr. de Ribbing had stated that the possibilities of expressing political views in Oman were limited. In fact they were non-existent.

28. Typical of the occupation authorities' methods was their attempt to stir up racial strife. Many racial minorities had lived for a long time on the Omani coast quite harmoniously with the Arabs. Recently the occupation authorities had attempted to introduce large numbers of foreign immigrants into the area and had given them employment by substituting them for Arabs. At the same time pamphlets were being circulated among the Arab population preaching hostility to the immigrant races. Those pamphlets were issued secretly by the occupation authorities and were denounced by the Omani resistance as a classical example of "divide and rule".

29. He had photographs for the Committee showing the damage done to towns of Oman by air raids. Mr. Edwards had witnessed the shelling of a village by British artillery. He himself had the signed testimony of a British soldier who had served in Oman witnessing that Omani wounded were left without proper medical care. The soldier had requested that his letter should be communicated for the purposes of authentication only to the representatives of Sweden, whose impartiality was beyond doubt. Other British soldiers had testified before the Committee for the Rights of Oman and had denounced occupation methods. That Committee condemned the loss of human life and the suffering deliberately provoked by the occupation authorities and the Sultan's refusal to allow the Red

Cross to treat the wounded. By that decision, the Sultan and his masters had shown their wish to drag the human race back to a darker age. The United Nations must heed the cry of anguish of the Omani people and condemn the acts of a colonialism which trampled on rights and cared nothing for human suffering in its pursuit of a selfish policy.

30. He then expressed the views of the Committee for the Rights of Oman on the report of the Secretary-General's Special Representative on his visit to Oman (S/5562). His Committee had the greatest respect for Mr. de Ribbing, but the latter's mission had been hampered by his very terms of reference; the fact that he had gone to Oman as a guest of the occupation authorities without being accompanied by a representative of the Omani resistance movement and his not being able to include in his report the testimony of the leaders of the Imamate made an accurate assessment of the situation impossible. Mr. de Ribbing had himself admitted that when he wrote in his letter of transmittal that it would not be appropriate, bearing in mind the terms of reference of his mission, to include in the report the discussion he had with the Imam of Oman and his representatives. That one sentence invalidated the entire report, and the United Nations was still without the impartial information that it had requested. Moreover, despite the Sultan's promise, the mission had not enjoyed complete freedom of movement: it had not been permitted to visit Fort Jalali, in Muscat, where many political prisoners were held. The Sultan's refusal to allow the mission to carry out an on-the-spot investigation of the plight of those prisoners and the conditions under which they were detained was a clear indication of guilt. It was also incredible that a United Nations mission investigating a political problem should be denied access to political prisoners whose testimony was essential.

31. None of the persons who had given Mr. de Ribbing the information on which he had based his report was an active participant in the Omani fight for liberation. Those persons were in the main the Sultan, Government officials and British officers. Moreover, the mission had not visited the main areas of military activity. The resistance movement did not have permanent control over any area, to avoid innocent civilians being shelled, but the Imamate operated a judicial system in many areas, enforced the law, and collected the social welfare tax. The mission had followed a route previously planned in consultation with the occupation authorities and, not knowing the country very well, it had not been in a position to judge which were the most useful place to visit. That difficulty might have been resolved if they had been accompanied by a representative of the Imamate.

32. It was hardly suprising, therefore, that the occupation authorities had succeeded in deceiving Mr. de Ribbing into thinking that the war had ended. The United Kingdom Government was concealing the truth even from its own people, and denied press reports of the death of British soldiers in Oman. The figures for war casualties given in paragraph 98 of report A/5562 were totally inaccurate being based solely on the evidence of the Sultan's entourage. They even included 236 persons who had perished at sea following an explosion aboard the liner *Dara* in 1961. The commission of inquiry into that disaster had refused, for lack of evidence, to charge the Omani liberation movement with an act of sabotage, and Imamate leaders had constantly denied any responsibility for that disaster. The Omani forces had had no reason to sabotage

the ship, although it was possible that it had been carrying explosives for the occupation forces, contrary to international maritime law.

33. At the last session the United Kingdom representative had told the Special Political Committee that in the view of the Sultan and the vast majority of present-day Omanis the Imamate was an archaic institution which had no constructive role to play in the evolution of Oman to a modern State. It could be asked how the United Kingdom representative had been able to ascertain the views of the vast majority of present-day Omanis, particularly since they had elected the present Imam as their Head of State. The United Kingdom representative had added that the religious leaders of the interior had objected to the tolerance accorded by the Sultan to other religions and his efforts to suppress the slave trade and the traffic in arms. In regard to the first charge, Oman strictly adhered to the principles of tolerance of Islam. As regards the slave trade, the Sultan had a large retinue of slaves and the slave trade flourished in his territory. The British authorities seemed concerned to maintain that state of affairs, whereas slavery was illegal in those regions which were under the Imam's control. The traffic in arms was explained by the Omani people's need to defend themselves against armed invasion.

34. The United Kingdom representative in the Special Political Committee had said that Sheikh Talib bin al-Hani had applied to the Sultan for a passport and the Sultan had shown Mr. de Ribbing a photostat of a passport application dated 1954. The Sheikh had affirmed that the photostat was a forgery. The Imamate had started issuing passports in 1952 and consequently it would not have been necessary for Sheikh Talib to apply for a Sultanate passport.

35. The United Kingdom representative had declared that during the Saudi Arabian intrusion into the Buraymi Oasis in 1952 the then Imam had sought the Sultan's advice in dealing with various approaches which had been made to him by the Saudi authorities and had responded to the Sultan's requirement as his overlord for men to help him expel the intruder by sending him a substantial contingent of his own tribesmen. The United Kingdom representative, however, had offered no evidence to show that it had been anything other than a normal military co-operation between two States and had produced no letter from the Imam acknowledging the Sultan as his overlord. Had the Imam sent a contingent of his tribesmen to the Sultan that would have been evidence of his possession of secular power, since he was able to raise an army. If the Sultan had been the overlord he should have mobilized the troops himself.

36. The United Kingdom representative had accused Imam Ghalib of annulling the 1937 oil concession which the Sultan alone, according to him, had had the right to grant. But under the terms of the Treaty of Sib the Sultan could not interfere in the Omani people's internal affairs. The granting of the concession had thus been an obvious violation of the treaty.

37. What had chiefly precipitated the United Kingdom invasion was probably Imam Ghalib's reform and modernization plan designed to provide free education and health services for the whole population and develop Oman, whose structure was already democratic, into a fully progressive and enlightened State. With its oil revenues, a prosperous society could be built up. But that had alarmed the United Kingdom

Government, which protected its vested interests with a chain of feudal despots stretching across South Arabia. The prospect had also worried the Sultan of Muscat, who squandered his oil and other revenues on his own pleasures and on his huge slave retinue. The Sultan and the occupation authorities did not wish to feed, educate or care for the poor, for if the people became educated and fit they would demand their rights and refuse to be trampled underfoot. That was why Imam Ghalib represented a threat to the established order of colonial oppression.

38. The United Kingdom representative had spoken of the Sultan's "commendably ambitious" development programme. In education, the Sultan's total achievements amounted to the building of two primary schools in the past thirty years. The total development budget was £190,000, as against £3 million for defence. If it was true that the war was ended, it was surely illogical to spend such a large sum on armaments. Mr. de Ribbing had recommended that development in the country should be greatly increased. The Committee for the Rights of Oman felt that that could best be done if the country was ruled by a leader who served his people instead of enslaving them and who spent State revenues on his people's welfare rather than for his own benefit. Imam Ghalib had shown that he was dedicated to the public interest, while the Sultan had shown that he was not.

39. The United Kingdom Government had often blamed the conflict on the fact that Imam Ghalib issued his own passports and had applied to join the League of Arab States. In fact, both policies had been initiated by his predecessor. Oman had applied for membership in the Arab League in 1952. It was incorrect to say that its application had not been accepted; it had been under consideration when the aggression had been launched, and would doubtless have been accepted. Because of the invasion, Oman had a status similar to that of Algeria before 1962: full aid was extended to it and it had the right to send a delegation to Arab League meetings. It was beyond question that Oman would be admitted to full membership once it had removed colonialism from its soil. When Oman had applied for membership in the League, the Imam's special envoy had been arrested by the Sultan and deported, and the United Kingdom had stirred up trouble in a region controlled by the Imam, whose sovereignty had been recognized by the population. The Imam had sought to end the disturbances by peaceful means, but the outcome had been the capture of the town of Ibri by the Sultan's forces with British assistance.

40. He next examined the possibilities of a solution to the conflict. At previous sessions of the General Assembly, representatives of the Arab States had urged a return to the status quo, in other words, the implementation of the Treaty of Sib, which gave de facto recognition to the Imamate of Oman and the Sultanate of Muscat as two separate States. Nevertheless, the United Kingdom representative had insisted that such a solution would only be a process of fragmentation and that self-determination was not applicable to any section of a homogeneous population such as that of Muscat and Oman. The Committee for the Rights of Oman felt that a solution, to be viable, should be beneficial and satisfying to the inhabitants of the area. The Imamate was nothing more than an instrument for the expression of the people's will, which was the foundation of Omani constitutional law.



41. The problem was that the people of Oman were being denied the opportunity to express their will; that their constitutional law was being interpreted for them and even suppressed by a foreign power; that they were forced to submit to an armed occupation and to live under a mediaeval ruler not of their own choice. It was therefore a problem of colonialism and for that reason the Committee for the Rights of Oman urged self-determination for the Omani people.

42. The matter of interpretation of the Treaty of Sib should not affect the criterion of the popular will. If the population of the whole area of Oman and Muscat was homogeneous, it should be free to choose its own ruler and to decide whether it was one State or two. Whether the people wished to be united or fragmented, no one had the right to deny them the choice or to dictate arbitrarily which alternative they should choose. If they wanted Imam Ghalib as their ruler, they should have him. The representative of the United Kingdom denied that the people of Oman should have self-determination; he was setting up his Government as an arbiter of that people's destiny and denying them a say in their own future. The Fourth Committee should affirm that the Omani people had a right that was granted to the whole human race: a right to choose a life of dignity and freedom to make their own decisions.

43. The humanitarian aspect of the question should not be forgotten either. He asked what had happened to the more than 500 Omanis detained for political reasons by the occupation authorities over the last seven years, and what was to become of them; whether men and women would continue to be sold as slaves to the Sultan; and whether wounded men would continue to be abandoned on the battlefield and their villages destroyed. The Committee for the Rights of Oman requested the United Nations to instruct the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples to carry out a thorough investigation of the Oman question.

44. The British people had a long tradition of democracy and defence of human rights, and were sorry to see that tradition violated by their present Government. All British citizens whose consciences were troubled by the problem of Oman asked the Fourth Committee to help the people of Oman to regain their rights. Then the British people would be able to hold their heads high once again and continue to make a valuable contribution to the good of the human race.

45. The CHAIRMAN thanked Mr. Glubb for his statement.

46. In his opinion it would be desirable to close the list of speakers on the question of Oman at 6 p.m. that same day.

47. Mr. MUFTI (Syria) requested that the petitioner's statement should be circulated as an official document.

48. His delegation would prefer the list of speakers not to be closed that day.

49. The CHAIRMAN said that if there was no objection the text of Mr. Glubb's statement would be circulated in the usual way.

*It was so decided.*

50. Mr. KHALAF (Iraq) supported the Syrian delegation's request concerning the closure of the list of speakers. When discussion had begun some dele-

gations would be better able to state whether they wished to speak. Furthermore the question of Oman was a very complex subject and it would be regrettable if delegations hesitated to speak simply out of anxiety to expedite the debate.

51. The CHAIRMAN observed that in suggesting the closure of the list of speakers that evening he had borne in mind that the Committee proposed to hear a number of speakers at the afternoon meeting. However, since certain delegations had raised objections, he suggested that no decision should be taken until the following day. The Committee was already far behind in its work, and it would be desirable for the general debate on the question of Oman to be concluded by Thursday, 5 December, at the latest and draft resolutions to be submitted next day if possible. The Fourth Committee must not hold up the work of the General Assembly and should keep as closely as possible to its work programme.

52. Mr. SHAMMOUT (Yemen) welcomed the petitioners and thanked them for their very helpful statements. Mr. Glubb, who was defending the cause of the peoples of Muscat and Oman against the brutal colonialist régime of the United Kingdom, was himself a British subject who had kept faith both with his own country and with the cause of justice and freedom. The Yemeni delegation flatly opposed the attitude of the British Authorities, but had always made a distinction between the authorities and the people of the United Kingdom. It congratulated Mr. Glubb and his colleagues and hoped that those who were struggling for freedom would soon win the day.

53. He asked whether Mr. Glubb would state what reasons had prompted him to take up the cause of the people of Oman rather than any other, and what his relations were with the nationalist movement of that country.

54. Mr. GLUBB (Committee for the Rights of Oman) replied that his interest in the question of Oman did not prevent him from sympathizing with other causes. When men were suffering and fighting for justice, he was fully prepared to give them all the help he could. His particular interest in the question of Oman arose from the fact that he was preparing a thesis on the constitutional law of that country at London University. When he had visited Oman two years previously, at a time when very little had been known about the territory and when no one had thought of defending it even though the United Kingdom Government was waging a war there, he had felt the need to come to the country's defence.

55. In reply to the Yemeni representative's second question, he had no official relations with the Imam or with the organizations of liberation. Some leaders of those organizations were, however, personal friends of his and he respected them as true democrats.

56. Mr. SHAMMOUT (Yemen) asked the petitioners whether they had any information on the discovery of oil in Oman.

57. Mr. GLUBB (Committee for the Rights of Oman) replied that the organization to which he belonged had some information on that subject. When Mr. Edwards, the Chairman of the Committee for the Rights of Oman, had visited Oman in 1959 he had been shown fossils which had been found at a great depth underground and which, according to an American expert, reliably indicated the presence of oil. Further information had been received since then. A member of the Committee

for the Rights of Oman who had secured employment in the Shell Oil Company had uncovered a great many facts which the authorities had been trying to keep secret. An oil well in the desert was yielding great quantities of high-grade oil and some experts thought that the resources of Oman might be comparable with those of Venezuela or Kuwait. Although such predictions might be optimistic, it was undeniable that those resources were considerable. The fact that preparatory work had begun on the construction of a pipeline and a tanker berth seemed to confirm that sizable deposits had been discovered.

58. Mr. SHAMMOUT (Yemen) asked the petitioner whether the casualties he had mentioned had been reported in the British Press.

59. Mr. GLUBB (Committee for the Rights of Oman) replied that the British Press had occasionally mentioned the casualties sustained. Mr. Edwards had reported some instances in the memorandum he had submitted to the Committee (A/C.4/604/Add.1). In the majority of cases, however, such news was not made public. The London *Times* of 16 December 1958 had stated that the Sultan and the United Kingdom Government did not want news of what was happening in the country to spread. The situation had scarcely improved since then and the few events reported in the United Kingdom Press had been mentioned primarily through the efforts of Mr. Edwards and his co-workers.

60. Mr. SHAMMOUT (Yemen) asked the petitioners whether they knew of any co-operation between the nationalist movement of Oman and the Arabian Peninsula.

61. Mr. GLUBB (Committee for the Rights of Oman) replied that the movements defending freedom in the Arabian Peninsula had many points in common with the liberation movement in Oman and would like to have more contacts with it. He also knew that there was very close co-ordination among those on the other side: there was a line of British bases extending from Bahrain to Aden, which were often called upon to suppress democratic activities in the area. A few months previously a demonstration had taken place at Qatar and the British fleet had appeared. Demonstrations which had occurred in another sheikhdom had been put down by the British armed forces. Since the various British bases collaborated in suppressing uprisings, it was natural that the defenders of democracy in the area should also unite.

62. Mr. SHAMMOUT (Yemen) asked the petitioners whether they could give any details of the role played by British military bases in the Arabian Peninsula in suppressing the Oman liberation movement.

63. Mr. GLUBB (Committee for the Rights of Oman) thought that he had already given information on that point. He could, however, state that reinforcements had recently been sent from Aden to take repressive action against the Beni Ali tribes. Indeed, reinforcements were sent whenever the resistance became too strong for the occupation forces; that was why British forces had been sent to Hadhramaut.

64. Mr. SHAMMOUT (Yemen) asked whether, to the knowledge of the petitioners, there existed in the United Kingdom committees to defend the liberation movements in territories such as Southern Rhodesia and South West Africa and, if so, whether the Committee for the Rights of Oman was acting in co-operation with those bodies.

65. Mr. GLUBB (Committee for the Rights of Oman) replied that there were several organizations in the United Kingdom defending democratic rights. Although the Committee for the Rights of Oman had no official relations with them, it shared their ideals and was happy to offer them its co-operation. There were, in particular, a movement for colonial liberation and a movement for the abolition of apartheid, in which the members of his Committee had been invited to participate. There was no organization dealing exclusively with Southern Rhodesia; however, he was a personal friend of the London representative of the Southern Rhodesia liberation movement.

66. Mr. SHAMMOUT (Yemen) thanked the petitioner for his replies, which had fully satisfied him.

67. Mr. SUPIT (Indonesia) welcomed the petitioners and asked what they thought of the report of the Secretary-General's Special Representative (A/5562), as a whole.

68. Sheikh TALIB BIN ALI AL-HANI said that the Omani delegation's views on the report as a whole would be transmitted to the Committee later, in writing.

69. Mr. SUPIT (Indonesia) observed that, although the Treaty of Sib was of fundamental importance in the matter, the Secretary-General's Special Representative had been unable to induce the Sultan to provide him with an authentic text of that instrument. He therefore hoped that the petitioners could give him some particulars as to the authenticity of the text reproduced in annex IX to the report (A/5562).

70. Mr. GLUBB (Committee for the Rights of Oman) replied that the authenticity of the text reproduced in the report had apparently been vouched for by Sheikh Mohammad Salimi, the son of Salimi, the great specialist in constitutional law who had taken part in the negotiations leading up to the Treaty of Sib. Mr. Glubb said that before leaving London, he had compared a text in Salimi's possession with the text submitted to the Committee and had found them identical. Since Mr. de Ribbing had stressed the need to obtain an authentic text, it was significant that the Sultan had not handed him the one in his possession and that he claimed not to be bound by the Sib agreements. If those agreements had been favourable to the Sultan, it was highly probable that he would readily have produced the original text of the Treaty and accepted the obligations it imposed. The Sultan's attitude thus appeared to confirm that his sovereignty extended only to Muscat and a number of coastal towns, but not to Oman.

71. Mr. SUPIT (Indonesia), referring to the first sentence in paragraph 103 of the Special Representative's report and to paragraph (4) of annex VIII to that report, asked the petitioners whether the forces at the Sultan's disposal were composed of foreigners or indigenous inhabitants.

72. Mr. GLUBB (Committee for the Rights of Oman) recalled having mentioned in his statement that all the officers were British. At the present time approximately half the troops were mercenaries. It was proposed to recruit some 2,000 more mercenaries, and that would bring the proportion of foreigners up to about three-quarters. It was difficult to describe that army as an indigenous force when the number of foreigners grew as the Sultan lost confidence in the local population and felt the need to tighten his grip. The assertion that there were no British forces in Oman must be refuted. Military bases of the size of

those at Salalah and Masinah were too large to be concealed. It was difficult, then, to understand how the United Kingdom could continue to claim that there were no British troops in Oman. The statement made in the report that around 1958 everything had been merged in agreement with the United Kingdom Government was correct. After the Sultan's forces had been defeated by Sheikh Talib bin Ali they had had to be reorganized; that had been done under British military control, or at any rate under the supervision of British military advisers.

73. Mr. SUPIT (Indonesia) thanked the petitioner for his replies, which were entirely satisfactory to him.

74. Mr. KRAFT (Denmark) asked the Chairman whether it would be possible for the Secretary-General's Special Representative to comment on the statement made by Mr. Faris Glubb.

75. The CHAIRMAN said that the Danish representative's question would be answered at a later meeting.

#### AGENDA ITEM 55

##### Question of South West Africa (*continued*)\*

76. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee of the General Assembly's decision, in its resolution 1899

(XVIII), to keep the question of South West Africa on its agenda. He read out a letter in which the Reverend Michael Scott requested that a statement signed by four petitioners from South West Africa and a paper relating to the subject matter of the inquiry called for in resolution 1899 (XVIII), paragraph 8 (b), should be circulated to the Committee. He suggested that, if there was no objection, those papers should be circulated as an official Committee document.

*It was so decided.*<sup>2/</sup>

77. Mr. MUFTI (Syria) observed that General Assembly resolution 1899 (XVIII) called for a reply from the South African Government by 30 November 1963 at the latest. Although that time-limit had now expired, the Committee still did not know whether or not a reply had been received.

78. The CHAIRMAN said that at the afternoon meeting he hoped to be able to give, if not the expected reply, at least some information on the progress of negotiations.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.

\*Resumed from the 1477th meeting.

<sup>2/</sup> See A/C.4/626.