

**Ruth DEIBLER**

**Literature and Politics:  
Mohammed Salih  
and  
Political Change in Uzbekistan  
from 1979 to 1995**

**Indiana University  
Bloomington, 1996**

## CONTENT

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chapter One – 1977-1985 .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Chapter Two – 1986-1989 .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Chapter Three – 1989-1992 .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Chapter Four – 1992-Early 1995 .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>41</b>

## Introduction

In the late 1970s and the decade following, immense changes occurred within the Soviet Union. The results of both a lack of innovative advances in technology and a system which rewarded people for work regardless of how well it was done began to show up in economic decline. After Brezhnev's death in 1982, leaders Andropov and Chernenko initiated a crackdown on corruption as a means to alter the situation. When Gorbachev came to power in March 1985, he began economic reform through restructuring and a new openness in society: perestroika and glasnost. These changes affected all fifteen republics, including Uzbekistan. When such changes have occurred, writers throughout the Soviet Union, although not always able to publish their works, have played an important role in expressing the desires and opinions of the common people. This is also true in Uzbekistan. A modern-day writer in this type of role (born in 1949), is Muhammad Salih.

Writing and politics are closely interwoven in the life of Muhammad Salih. He transforms his thoughts regarding the events around him into words that express his concerns and desire for change. The development of Salih's prose directly coincides with the political development of Uzbekistan from 1977 to the present. The style of Salih's writing changed from that of imagery and symbolism to pure political writing as the political atmosphere also changed from a closed Soviet society, to glasnost, then to political independence for Uzbekistan. The first of the four periods was 1977 to 1985, during which little freedom existed. The second begins in the early Gorbachev era, with the introduction of glasnost in 1986. The third period is from 1989 to 1992. Near the end of this period, in September 1989, Uzbekistan adopted a language law; near the end, Uzbekistan declared its independence and held its first presidential election. The final period encompasses 1992 to 1995 when Karimov, the president of Uzbekistan, firmly established his authoritarian rule.

The road to independence was a long one, and in order to fully understand the events covered in this paper, a brief background of the history of Uzbekistan is necessary. Before it became a republic of the Soviet Union, much of the area of Uzbekistan was part of the larger Turkestan, which began to be colonized by the Russian empire during the nineteenth century, first through trading practices and then through the establishment of military and administrative centers. Shortly after the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, the Soviet government somewhat arbitrarily carved up Turkestan and the territory of the recently abolished Bukharan Amirate and the Khivan Khanate into five republics. This was part of the strategy of ensuring Central Asian weakness and continued central control by the Soviet government. The policy created an Uzbekistan, an «Uzbek» people and a distinct «Uzbek language.»

Another scheme for keeping ethnic minorities in submission and ensuring Russian dominance in language, culture, and history, was the Stalinist purge of

the 1930s which swept the whole Soviet Union. Stalin ordered the executions of thousands of Central Asians, including Uzbek's, many of whom were well educated: the elite, the writers, the historians and the respected elders in society. In addition to destroyed lives, Uzbek history for that period was distorted. The central government forced Uzbek authors to write about and glorify only Russian events and conquests, implying that Central Asians were less cultured and less civilized.

Beginning in the 1930s, Moscow also promoted unification of Soviet peoples by Russifying all minorities through the language policy it promulgated. Moscow insisted that Uzbek's learn Russian and rely on it for communication with the administration and within governing bodies. Most education also stressed the use of Russian; in most disciplines it was impossible to go beyond secondary school studying in a language other than Russian. Thus, the entire elite had to speak, read and write fluent Russian. This caused the use and knowledge of the Uzbek language to decline.

All of the above affected the Uzbek's sense of culture and identity, but the cotton monoculture affected their economy, their land, and their health, essentially destroying all three. Before the Russian conquest, people in what became Uzbekistan grew their own rice, grain, and vegetable crops, as well \*as cotton. Then the Russian tsars began to increasingly rely on Turkestan's cotton, so the Turkic people increased the amount of land under cotton cultivation. After the Bolshevik revolution, Moscow continued to rely on Uzbekistan's cotton especially, and pressured Uzbeks to increase their production and sell the raw cotton to the Russian republic far below market cost. In Russia, factories transformed the cotton fiber into fabric. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the central government, through the cotton plan, compelled Uzbeks to abandon their traditional system of crop rotation and letting the land lie fallow to regain nutrients, and forced them to increase the amount of land under cotton production at the expense of grain and other edible crops. Therefore, Uzbeks had to rely on Russian imports to feed their own people. The increased land under cultivation, along with inefficient irrigation systems and increased use of pesticides (to ensure a fuller cotton crop) brought about the desiccation and poisoning of soils, water shortage, air pollution, and overwhelming health problems. The cotton monoculture continued, although, even as early as the 1960s, reports surfaced that the level of the Aral Sea was dropping because no water was reaching it. This is the Uzbekistan in which Muhammad Salih grew up, and these are some of the problems which he addressed.

Salih's background provides important insights into what made him the person he is how he came to be a writer and why he felt more freedom to express his thoughts than those of the older generation, even in the days before glasnost. He was born 20 December 1949 in the province of Khorezm in a small village named Yangibazar. After finishing middle school in 1968, he served two years in the Soviet army. From 1970 until 1975 he studied in the Faculty of Journalism at Tashkent University, and later spent two years studying literature in Moscow. Those years of study enabled him to further develop his writing skills as well as to study the works of other writers. After completing his education, Salih worked in the Writers Union of Uzbekistan, and in 1988 he was elected to a secretary position. Muhammad Salih has been a writer since his youth. His poetry began to be published in 1966, and by the early 1990s twelve books of his poetry and prose works had been published

in Uzbekistan. He divorced his first wife, an Uzbek woman, leaving her with three children. His second wife, a Polish woman, bore him two more children. Simply because of his date of birth, he is a part of a new era; he did not live through the purges of the late 1930s or World War II and therefore did not fear repression from Moscow as did those of the previous generation. He grew up during a time when Khrushchev attempted to undo much of Stalin's terror and build a better, freer society. Also, he was able to achieve a high level of education which has made him part of the elite of Uzbekistan who enjoy more privileges.

The printing of Salih's works on Uzbekistan presses depended very much on the time period, the political atmosphere, and what he wrote. Much of his early poetry was published in Uzbekistan, and some has been translated into other languages and even published abroad. He is mostly known for his poetry, but Salih also wrote short stories, and more recently, articles, which discuss politics in Uzbekistan. His early pieces, published in Uzbekistan, are all poems. Many of his short stories and articles, written between 1977 and 1988 were not published in journals or anywhere else until 1990. The fact that they were not published before then reflects Salih's boldness in writing about sensitive issues and the censorship, which existed in Uzbekistan. Most of the works discussed in this paper are Salih's short stories and articles, some of which were not published for some time after they were written. Whether a work was published at the time it was written will be noted as each is discussed, as this plays an important role in the development of the thesis.

The period of Salih's writing covered in this paper, from 1977 to early 1995, correspond to the periods outlined above and coincide with four distinct periods in the political development of Uzbekistan. Throughout all four periods, his style of writing changed and parallels the political developments of the time. To some extent his subjects vary, although the common theme of the importance of the Uzbek language in the republic/nation is seen throughout. In order to provide some background for the rest of Salih's works, this paper will begin the discussion of the relationship between Salih's writings and political developments with a work written in 1977. At that time Uzbeks still focused on fulfilling the cotton plan each year, and although the resulting ecological and environmental problems began to stare them in the face, the officials ignored them. Administrators and common citizens alike did little to address these problems. Salih's works reflect this closed society, as he writes using images and symbols.

Glasnost and perestroika began making changes in society during the second period, which spanned the years 1985 to 1989. Gradually, Moscow allowed problems to surface and is analyzed, the Communist Party directed a campaign for the ousting of corrupt officials, and the press had increased freedom to report these events. Salih's writing reflects this openness; he became much more direct, and he specifically addressed the economic, political and social problems he observed. He even became so bold as to directly speak out against some of Moscow's policies.

This freedom was curtailed beginning in the middle of 1989. And despite the fact that Uzbekistan gained independence following the coup attempt in Moscow in August 1991, little changed for the better. The small or even non-existent ideological foundation for independence in Uzbekistan compelled authorities to attempt instantaneously to create an economically and socially viable nation. By exercising strict control over dissenting groups, Islam Karimov, the president

established stability and an independent republic. Salih, too, became politically involved beginning in 1988. His writing at this time, at least that available to the public, was strictly political in nature as he tried to work within the political system for change.

The final period, from the end of 1992 to early 1995, demonstrates the increased authoritarian rule by Karimov, the control of the press, and economic and political disaster. Coinciding with political developments, Salih's writing once again reflected the total control of the media, as did his situation in which he wrote the last piece discussed in this paper. Because of Uzbek government policies, he fled the country in 1992, being no longer able to publish as he did in the 1970s and early 1980s, should he even de ire to do so. He continues to struggle for justice and democracy, although his writing is somewhat disillusioned and bitter.

## Chapter One- 1977-1985

In analyzing Salih's writings, the period from 1977 to 1985 is important because it provides a foundation on which to build and a basis for comparison with the later periods. It leads up to the beginnings of glasnost and perestroika. Problems such as the desiccation of the Aral Sea, the shortage of water, deterioration of health, unemployment, and a high population growth rate existed in Uzbekistan during this period. But, because of continued pressure by Moscow to fulfill the cotton plan each year and a reluctance to address any issue which may be perceived as a negative reaction to the governing administration, neither citizens of the Soviet Union nor the press addressed such problems until after 1982. This period is indicative of control by Moscow; citizens did not have the freedom to express any discontent openly.

Muhammad Salih reflected this lack of freedom and discontent in his writing, using symbolism and imagery, because he was not free to come out directly against the restricting forces of the Soviet regime. He wrote on three major themes in this early period. The first, evident in "Letter to My Younger Brother,"<sup>[1]</sup> appears to be a cry to his fellow Uzbeks not to blindly follow Soviet ideology but to think for themselves. The second theme, seen in the three statue tales, «The Sculpture Who Lost His Way,» «Those Who Stand Alone,» and «The Meeting,» seems to be a cautious statement against the Russian presence in Uzbekistan their authority, control and domination over Uzbeks. He portrays Russians as stubborn, tough, deceitful and even a little stupid. The final theme, which is a recurring one throughout all four periods, is the importance of the Uzbek language. The language theme is presented by two of Salih's poems: In an Alien land and «Speak in Turkii.» All these themes reflect Salih's thoughts about politics in Uzbekistan at this time.

Salih was not able to publish any of these pieces until years after they were written, a fact, which demonstrates both the sensitivity of the material and government censorship. The «Letter to My Younger Brother,» written in 1977, and the three statue tales, written in 1979, were published in 1990 in Kozi Tiyran Dard (The Watchful Eye of Suffering). «Speak in Turkii,» written in 1982, was also not published until 1990 in a book of Salih's poetry. In an Alien Land,» written in 1981, was published in 1986 in yet another book of Salih's poetry. The dates of publication indicate the delicate nature of the material and the gradual openness, which occurred in society. It is interesting to note that «In an Alien land was published in 1986, when, as will be shown, Uzbeks began clamoring for Uzbek to be their state language. On the other hand, «Speak in Turki» was not published until several years later, after the state language law had been adopted and Uzbeks were on the verge of declaring their sovereignty. Why this poem was also not published in 1986 remains unclear.

The first work discussed in the period is entitled «Letter to My Younger

Brother.» It demonstrates the first theme a cry to Uzbeks to learn, study, and think for themselves. This piece serves as the preface to Salih's book of short stories and articles, *Kozi Tiyrän Dard*. It begins the period from, 1977 to 1985 because it is the first story in the book and because its message reflects Salih's underlying desire in all his early writing to awaken the Uzbeks to understand what the central government was doing to them, to think for them selves, and to study and read on their own without undiscerningly accepting everything Moscow fed them. The «Letter to My Younger Brother» is written to his «uka» (younger brother), but more profoundly, it may be read as referring to Uzbeks, especially those of the younger generation. It serves as the preface to the book and was written in 1977, whereas all the other stories and articles in the book were written in 1979 and later. Thus the «letter» could be interpreted as Salih encouraging his readers to be his «uka,» to follow his advice, to become discerning and not unthinkingly swallow Moscow's ideology. Then he provides them with the rest of his book as resource material for them to do just that.

In «Letter to My Younger Brother,» Salih advises his brother to emulate the behavior of the child in the story Salih proceeds to relate. The child learns to read by delivering letters during the war. These letters to parents regarding their sons (soldiers serving in the war), were of two types: black or white. Black referred to those sons who died, and white to those who did not. This child is a «lover of books» even though few books are available and his father has no money to buy him reading material. But the child manages to borrow and read whatever books he can find. Salih thus stresses the importance of learning to read on one's own. He also encourages his «uka» to love books and knowledge.

Illustrations in the books which the child reads become an important issue in Salih's story. The illustrations appear to represent the central government indicating a specific direction it wants the Uzbeks to go, and the particular way it wants them to view things, without giving them any room for their own imagination or to think for themselves:

Every illustration in the book is a hindrance to him- If the child's imagination says, «A certain hero is in this shape,» the illustration stubbornly stands and says, «No, it is like! his,» staring at his eyes. The peculiarity of the illustration increases the child's nervousness. He used to not look at the illustrations, but instead tore them out and gave them to his younger sister (6)\* [2]

Salih seems to suggest that perhaps it is necessary for a reader to «tear out the illustrations» so that he himself can form ideas on the thoughts the book presents. The story continues as late one night the boy falls asleep over his book, and his fur hat, standing near the fireplace, catches fire and eventually the entire house nearly bums down. After this, the child's parents forbid him to read in the evenings, and that particular book is destroyed: whether in the fire or by the parents is unclear in the story. The conclusion of the story, Salih states, is that one should never doze «while reading a book at night because, «a fire might be set... The child loves the book, but weariness is betrayed in his body. Weariness creates indifference, making one fall asleep» (6). Salih seems to suggest that Uzbeks, who have tried to read and think for themselves without paying attention to the «Illustrations» provided by the Communist Party, have become weary in their striving and have fallen asleep. And, in falling asleep they have lost control over the situation; before they are able to do



anything, a «fire» breaks out, and the book, from which they were beginning to gain their own ideas, is destroyed.

Salih's final advice to his brother is that «not the books without illustrations, but books without ideas make a reader fall asleep. Do not read books without ideology,' your teacher truly explained. I advise you, 'Also, do not read books without ideas'» (6). He clearly states that it is not the dullness of a book without pictures, that is, without an ideology already provided, which makes a person apathetic, but a book without any concrete ideas to think about in the first place which atrophies the brain. Thus, in the first theme, Salih seems to want his readers to wake up and think for themselves, not simply follow, like sheep, the ideology put forth by Moscow.

The second theme in this period, following inferences made in «Letter to My Younger Brother,» is a description of Russian presence in Central Asia: Salih notes Russians' ignorance of where they live and their insensitivity to the environment and culture; he also notes Russian presence as one that does not belong in Central Asia; and Russians' unwillingness to change. Related to this is the theme that a great person is one who studies and thinks for himself., i.e., not imitating Russian dominance and ideology. The three pieces which express this theme are, on the surface, about statues of famous figures which stand in Uzbekistan. Written in 1979, they are three mini- vignettes about Russian sculptures which are very much out of place in this Central Asian setting.

In the first tale, «The Sculptures. Who Lost Their Way,» Salih begins by describing people standing in a bread line «holding their hearts in their hands» (66). The difference between this particular line and the stereotypical Russian bread lines comes out slowly. First, Salih demonstrates that neither the old people, nor the war or labor heroes, nor the religious leaders, are permitted to cut in front of the line, which is the usual custom. Then he says those in line are statues; not people, and they are «getting acquainted with one another.» Salih writes:

Indeed, our many statues do not know why they are standing, why and to where they have come. Someone leads them like a child saying, «you continue standing here, I will come back,» and they disappear,...and never return. What concerns the statue is this: here he is a stranger, wandering, not able to recognize the people standing at his side, and he continues to stand. (67)

In the paragraph following, Salih makes an important comparison between the statues standing together in a line and the one standing by himself; «in its time therefore, I just say this: successful statues stand by their lonely selves in an alley. Yes, a good philosophy which exists in life is also a custom among statues: a great person is always a lonely person» (67). And the last sentence which Salih writes is that in the lonely statue's hand is the inevitable book which he spends his time reading.

In the next statue tale, «Those Who Stand Alone,» the statue standing alone is Pushkin, a famous Russian writer. A fan of the writer Byron (an English writer popular in Uzbekistan and whose works have been translated into Uzbek), passes Pushkin's statue and wonders why Pushkin is there and not Byron. The answer jokingly given is that Pushkin has fans in Uzbekistan, but not only that, Pushkin loved Uzbekistan even to the point of putting his life on the line in a duel for the republic. Salih sarcastically writes, «do you know the reason Pushkin duelled with

Dante? The reason was Uzbekistan. If you pass by his [Pushkin's] side, he moves you because you know very well, great proletarian writer, how he loved ordinary people like you. Worship him as a brothe? (68).

Salih continues:

The weeping willow trees which surround the great poet slowly sing songs.

Usually while listening to songs Eastern people involuntarily move their heads with the music. Regretfully, sculptures cannot move their heads.

Particularly Pushkin. Because in Europe they don't move their heads. Europeans imitate any kind of melody by tapping their feet. Every passerby who strolls through Pushkin Alley, standing tapping his feet quietly and beautifully, will be a witness to Pushkin's standing quiet, listening to the unknown nation's music with his whole bronze body. (68)

Salih points out that statues of Pushkin are not found in the streets of London or Paris, but, «in any case, he [Pushkin] stands in the most beautiful crossroads of Tashkent» (68).

Pushkin, realizing then that a statue of Gorki is standing not too far away, breaks in asking Gorki how he came to be in Uzbekistan. The answer to Pushkin's question does not need to be stated for his readers, and Salih does not bother. In fact, Salih writes that at this question the statue of Gorki does not even turn to look since its neck is thick and tough. Because, «in order to turn their heads, at least one hundred years are needed. In the second place, your question is an extremely childish one. The ordinary winds which are able to move you and us cannot move the statues. It is very large social events, such as stormy revolutions which can move them» (68).

In the last of the three statue tales, 'The Meeting,» Salih begins by saying that the character of the sculptor is evident in his creation. In other words, a statue represents the sculptor himself. «If a sculptor is a craftsman who is far-seeing, the statues which he created will also be far-seeing. And, if a sculptor is energetic, if he is feisty, he will describe his works in the manner he himself admires « (69). Salih goes on to describe two Russian statues, Pushkin and Gorki. Thus these, statues represent Russian presence and Russian ideology in Uzbekistan.

Salih then tells how two statues, Alexander Sergeevich Pushkin and Aleksei Maksimovich Gorki, jump down from their pedestals and become live, moving figures. Like the statues in the first tale, they express the desire to become acquainted with one another and do not know where they are. Gorki has to inform Pushkin that he is somewhere in Central Asia Pushkin says, «I am extremely pleased to become acquainted with you. But excuse me, will you tell me: where am I?» Gorki answers, «in a way, to speak truthfully we are not in Russia: you are in the country where I am standing» (69). They both long for Russia, wondering when they will return Pushkin says, «I longed to pour out all my words; not only birch trees, but the great river Volga, the city of Nizhniny Novgorod and its dear friend Vladimir Illich, but the solidarity of writers of realistic prose did not allow for this» (69). Pushkin declares they must return to Russia, so the two of them catch a flight to Moscow. Gorki, however, discovers he has left his walking-stick somewhere in Central Asia. Pushkin reassures him by saying they will get his stick back, but Gorki counters by reminding Pushkin that they do not know where they were in Central Asia. He states, 'We do not know the name of the city from which we flew» (70).

Salih finishes much as he began, referring to those who create the statues, stating that they will one day fall because of their passion for their own homeland and because they are strangers in Uzbekistan. «Therefore, if the passion which is in the sculptures is not false, if they did not deceive our eyes, having stood, they themselves will fall from the pedestal where they are standing now, and one day, without a doubt, they will make their way to any side they wish» (70). Salih sarcastically concludes: «We, who are great fans of your people, will open a new museum for the famous stick which they forgot» (70).

The first theme seen in «The Sculptures Who Lost Their Way» is that «a great person is always a lonely person» and someone who studies and think for himself. It is such individuals who are great people, not the ones standing together in a line who do not even know where they are. Perhaps these lonely statues are the great leaders---the ones with ideas who lead, and thus occupy a place of prominence apart from the others. Or perhaps Salih is referring to himself as a single statue alone with his ideas. As will be shown, Salih later tried to work for change within the political system rather than standing by himself outside. In this tale the statue stands alone holding a book, instead of his heart, in his hands. Thus, instead of being one who demonstrates his vulnerability to the system by holding his heart in his hands like those statues standing in line, he reads a book in order to gain knowledge. Salih says that those who stand alone, off in an obscure alley, are the ones who have ideas gained from reading books (books probably without illustrations, if one remembers his «Letter to My Younger Brother»)- the ones who think for themselves. These are the great people, not the ones standing in line who do not even know where they are.

The ignorance of Russians living in Uzbekistan and their insensitivity to Central Asian environment and culture is a feature of all three statue tales. In «The Sculptures Who Lost Their Way,» Salih writes that the statues do not know the places to which they have come; they are strangers, wandering around trying to recognize people. The statues may be Slavs, transplanted in Central Asia, or they may even be Uzbeks, also lost and confused in their own land as a result of following Communist Party dictates. Those in line are trying to get acquainted with each other so that they will at least have something in common. The statues in «Those Who Stand Alone» do not understand the local culture where people move their heads in time with music rather than tapping their feet. And in the previous statue tale, when Gorki admits he and Pushkin do not know the name of the city from which they came, Salih seems to poke fun at the Russians because of their presence in Uzbekistan in the first place, and their ignorance in not knowing exactly where they were.

In the next discussion of Russian presence Salih suggests that Russians do not even belong in Central Asia. In «Those Who Stand Alone,» Salih begins by placing Pushkin's statue alone, thus admitting, because of his emphasis in «The Sculptures Who Lost Their Way,» that Pushkin is a great writer. But because of the sarcasm which follows, describing how much Pushkin supposedly loved Uzbekistan, Salih seems to imply that although Pushkin is great, his statue does not belong in Central Asia. And when Salih points out that statues of Pushkin are not in London or Paris, he appears to suggest they are not there because those nations have no desire for a Russian sculpture of Pushkin: they have their own heroes such

as Byron to commemorate. Underlying these statements is the thought that Uzbeks do not particularly want a statue of Pushkin either, but the statue is there because of Moscow's domination. In «The Meeting,» Salih goes even further when he writes that Pushkin and Gorki returned to Moscow, thus perhaps suggesting that Russians ought to leave Central Asia, and maybe even expressing the hope that someday they will. When Gorki discovers he has left his walking stick somewhere in Central Asia, Salih says Uzbeks will open a museum just for that infamous stick. In writing this, Salih seems to be hoping that one day Uzbeks will immortalize the Soviet regime in a museum, preserving the Russian presence only as something of the past, laughing because they now possess that stupid stick which was so precious to Gorki, but could not find his way back to retrieve it.

The final description of Russian presence seen in the three tales is Russians' unwillingness to change. Salih implies in «Those Who Stand Alone» that Russians are stubborn and not able to change unless a revolution occurs. Yet in a few years the «one hundred years» were up, as glasnost and perestroika began to slowly move the «thick necks» of the Soviet empire. They were no «ordinary winds,» and the «stormy revolution» really was no revolution at all but the internal collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The final theme of Salih's writing in this period concerns the value of the Uzbek language. This theme is expressed in two poems—perhaps in poetry and not prose because Salih is first of all a poet, and therefore he expresses that which is most meaningful to him in this manner. “In An Alien Land” written in 1981 (but not published until 1986), he never mentions the Uzbek language, but the message is nevertheless clear: I give my own greetings in another language, but the message is nevertheless clear:

They invite me to breakfast in another language.  
 Like a blind man in the streets of the city  
 They lead me in only three or four words of another language.  
 They show me a star in another language.

They awaken me in the dawn in that language.  
 I am afraid not of my own language  
 But forgetting those three or four words  
 In this great city.

If my homeland is my dream,  
 The homeland is my dream because,  
 I speak in my own language  
 Only in my dream.

(Alis-tebessum saiasi 105)

Simply from the title, «Ozge Elda,» one knows that the sentiment expressed in this poem will be strong. The poem expresses Salih's frustration at having to use a language that is not his own in all aspects of life, from dawn until night. He feels like a stranger in his own hometown because the language spoken in the streets is Russian. His homeland does not exist. He can only dream of his own homeland, although ironically, he does live in Uzbekistan. And although he is not afraid of using his own language, he does fear it will soon become lost in the expanse of Russian used in the city. He is now living «in an alien land.» But fortunately, he is still able to speak his mother tongue in his dreams; this means there is still hope and the language has not been lost forever.

«Speak in Turki» written in 1982 but not published until 1990, describes the paradox of speaking in Uzbek and how it should be used to express one's deep emotions. Salih writes that on all occasions, whatever the mood, one should speak in «Turki»:

It is easy to speak in Turki,  
It is not so very difficult to speak in Turki.  
It is so very enjoyable to speak in this language, so very bitter.  
If your mood is merry, if you awake on the right side of the bed.  
If you have no regret from the day,  
If your faith is in the future-speak in Turki.  
If you love someone,  
And love does not fit in your heart-speak in Turki  
If you hate someone,  
If your hatred catches in your throat-speak in Turki.  
(Arzu Fuqarasi 121)

Together these two poems, although they express the love and importance Salih feels in the language and his desire that Uzbek be spoken more, do not demand its increased use as his later writing does.

All the pieces enumerated here reflect the political situation of the time-control from the center-because none were published when Salih wrote them. Muhammad Salih was concerned about Russian presence and influence in Uzbekistan. He wanted Uzbeks to wake up, to think for themselves about what was going on around them. He also felt that language was an important issue. Yet he was not able to write in a straightforward manner as he does later. Perhaps at this time. Salih wrote in a flowing, flowery language, utilizing illusion and imagery, in hopes of getting his message across by having his works published. He uses Russian statues to represent Russian presence in Uzbekistan; the «tough, thick necks» of the statues depict Russian stubbornness, and book illustrations represent Soviet ideology. From 1986 onward, as is demonstrated in the next period, his style became more candid as political openness in society increased.

## Chapter Two 1986-1989

The period 1986 to 1989 was characterized by several political developments in Uzbekistan. It continued the anti-corruption campaign initiated by Moscow in 1983, and perestroika and glasnost began. These addressed the cotton monoculture which had produced many problems: the desiccation and salinization of soils; the drying of the Aral Sea; a high infant mortality rate; an increase in cancer, tuberculosis, lung disease, typhoid, hepatitis, gastro-intestinal disorders, and birth defects; a contamination of mothers' milk; and an overall shorter life expectancy. The new openness extended to areas beyond the cotton monoculture. Uzbeks began discussing the rehabilitation of their writers (such as Cholpan and Fitrat), nationalism, wages, Moscow's policy of imposed family planning, unemployment and the importance and usage of the Uzbek language. As will be demonstrated, in the later part of the period, people felt free enough to express themselves through demonstrations in which they demanded further rights and freedoms.

This period continued the anti-corruption campaigns. The five works of Salih in this period to be discussed here, mention the campaign only in passing, but a brief discussion of the anti-corruption policy is necessary to provide a clearer background to the cotton monoculture and the consequent problems faced by Uzbekistan. The campaign focused on corrupt leaders throughout the Soviet Union who falsified reports, received and gave bribes, promoted family members instead of more able candidates, and various other forms of corruption. From 1983 through early 1989, Moscow systematically removed such corrupt leaders, from top officials to lowly oblast leaders. Uzbekistan was one of the republics most strongly hit by the campaign because of the problems of the cotton monoculture. With the increased salinization of soils and lack of water, it was impossible for Uzbeks to fulfill the cotton quota given them by Moscow. The result was that Uzbeks were forced to pad production figures or face Moscow's wrath. That did not leave them much of a choice--they falsified the figures. So, thousands of tons of cotton existed only on paper. Of course Uzbeks were paid (albeit at a low rate) for this non-existent cotton. In June 1984, one report stated that in the preceding eighteen months three officers were removed from the Central Committee of Uzbekistan. They were reported in newspapers as having retired or having been transferred, but in actuality they were dismissed (Sheehy 1984b). Later, however, newspaper accounts openly named officials and listed the charges of corruption.[3] In August 1984, one scholar wondered whether Rashidov (Uzbekistan's first secretary from 1958 until his death 31 October 1983) would have been brought under fire had he not died of a heart attack in 1983 (Sheehy 1984a).

The anti-corruption campaign continued until the beginning of 1989 in Uzbekistan. In August 1984 one Western analyst stated that anti-corruption measures were unlikely to take root because one party rule, chronic shortage and

a system in which both material rewards and career prospects are closely bound up with plan fulfillment inevitably give rise to all kinds of abuses. On top of that, nepotism flourishes in places where a high premium is placed on looking after one's kin (Sheehy 1984a). In 1989 the Uzbekistan administration, already feeling for some time that Uzbekistan had been unjustly accused more than the other republics, reversed some of the charges made against individuals.

In the writings discussed in this paper, Salih makes one reference to the fact that he and other Uzbeks agreed that the anti-corruption campaign had gone too far. In «A Difficult Way of Awakening,» while discussing the three main «eras» of Moscow's rule (under Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev), Salih implies that the population of Uzbekistan was simply a puppet under each, without the freedom to express themselves in a true way, but at least it was not singled out in a negative way over the other republics. Salih felt discriminated against because the anti-corruption campaign focused on Uzbekistan. He writes, «sometimes we became tired of praising ourselves, raising ourselves to the sky, and now we are tired of criticizing ourselves severely, putting ourselves in the ground» (183).

The demonstrations at the end of this period show the political development of the time and relate to the issues about which Salih writes. As writing was Salih's way of expression, so demonstrations were the only means available for some people to affirm their values and beliefs. The largest, most enduring and costly demonstrations (in terms of lives and goods) occurred in the summer of 1989. The demonstrations began, however, in 1987 with Tatars fighting for their right to return to the Crimea («5,000 Tatars». 1987), and the Tatars repeatedly demonstrated throughout the following year.[4] (Approximately 400,000 Tatars were deported to Central Asia from their homeland under Stalin in 1944.) In January 1989, 300 Afghan students studying in Tashkent rioted, and, although exactly what happened is not clear from reports, several people were hospitalized and some twenty cars were damaged (Alimov 1989). Then in February, «hundreds» gathered in the streets of the capital demanding the removal of Mufti Babakhan, the leading representative of official Islam in the USSR. A puppet of the state, the Mufti was known for his womanizing, immorality and total lack of knowledge of the Koran (Bohr 1989a, 1989b). Calls for the removal of the Mufti continued for a year.

The most intense demonstrations began in June 1989 and continued through August of that year. Initial press reports declared that the entire situation started when a Meshketian Turk overturned an Uzbek woman's fruit stall at the market after stating that the price of her strawberries was too high. Later Uzbek press reports admitted other underlying causes and reported a few deaths and injuries and the establishment of a curfew in the city. A 16 June Radio Liberty report told of at least 87 dead, 974 injured, 748 homes burned and more than 50,000 «weapons» (some were simply rods and other common objects) confiscated during the first two weeks of June. The riot also spread outward to Kokand. Much of the rioting was directed at two targets: Meshketian Turks and cotton prices. Because of threats to their lives and destroyed housing, officials quickly evacuated 11,000 Meshketian Turks to a refugee camp and on 13 June relocated 4,500 of them in Russia (Bohr 1989d).

The two main factors which sparked the riots in the summer of 1989 were the population explosion and the distorted development of the economy. Gross

unemployment, increased pressures on land and water resources, lack of private plots for growing one's own food, pressure to grow more cotton, increased use of pesticides, an increase in infant mortality, low health standards, racial tension, low wages, and a lack of industrial skills all contributed to the disturbances (Sheehy 1989a). The tensions simply increased to a boiling point and erupted. Years of being buffeted by Moscow left the power structure in Uzbekistan in complete disarray; authorities had little control over the situation. The corruption scandals resulted in thousands of leaders being expelled from leadership positions, many of whom were innocent or could have done nothing different under the circumstances. Their absence left gaps and inexperienced persons in positions of leadership. Most important was the Uzbek leaders' inability to think ahead: their nearsightedness and lack of hope. One scholar wrote that hope for Uzbekistan lay in «informal groups» such as *Birlik* (Unity) which Salih helped to found in November 1988 (Critchlow 1989a)

*Birlik* held its own demonstrations. The core of the group from its outset consisted of the intelligentsia and youth, but later it attracted people of all backgrounds and levels of education. Their demands to the authorities concerned language laws, the reduction of cotton production, Uzbek sovereignty, health care, social welfare, and personal freedoms (Fierman 1991). On 19 March 1989, among other issues, they called for the official recognition of Uzbek as the state language. They tried to obtain permission to hold a demonstration, were refused, but held the rally anyway. On March 20, 12,000 gathered as Abdurahim Pulatov, a leader of *Birlik*, read their demands for a state language. Again on 9 April, *Birlik* members appealed for official recognition and demanded to be allowed to publish their own paper, and, supported by a crowd of approximately 100,000, also demanded the use of Uzbek as the primary language of the republic. Participants were also concerned with environmental problems; one banner read, «There Won't be a Central Asia Without the Aral Sea.» Salih read an appeal at the demonstration calling on leaders to stop discriminating against Uzbeks with unfounded charges of corruption. His speech showed the increased nationalistic attitude of Uzbek citizens when he said: «these people have not been fighting for their rights. No one has yet said: Either you learn my language or you leave Uzbekistan'» (Kocaoglu 1989). On 21 May, *Birlik* supporters staged their third demonstration with some 10,000 participants. They demanded the cotton quota be lowered and that formal recognition for their organization (Bohr 1989c). The authorities accused *Birlik* of inciting the riots of the summer of 1989, but *Birlik* leaders denied it, saying they could not possibly have organized such a massive disturbance.

In his writing, Muhammad Salih discusses many of the same problems Uzbeks voiced in their demonstrations; his writings are interrelated with political developments in Uzbekistan. His writings throughout this period become more politically oriented as he addresses issues he feels Moscow and Tashkent administrators needed to consider. In this paper five of Salih's works in this period will be looked at - these were written from 1986 to 1989. They are: «The Speech Read in the October Plenum, 1986, of the Writer's Union of Uzbekistan,» «Health to Women,» «Returning,» «A Difficult Way of Awakening,» and «Letter to the Academic Erkin Yusupov'. These compositions focus on four themes: the reinterpretation of Uzbekistan's history and rehabilitation of past Uzbek writers;



ecological and health problems; family planning; and Uzbek as a state language.

First, a word regarding the genre of these literary pieces and the change in censorship from the first period. All five of these pieces are articles or public addresses, not stories, and most were published shortly after Salih wrote them. He does not use symbolism or imagery, but boldly and clearly presents his concerns, his anger, and his views regarding the problems in the social and environmental spheres. His words become increasingly transparent, but his writing style still demonstrates the ease and flow of a poet and accomplished author. «The Speech» was a paper Salih read at the October 1986 Plenum of the Writers Union of Uzbekistan. It was not officially published until 1990. «Health to Women,» written in 1988, was published in 1990 in *Kozi Tiyran Derd*. (It is likely that it was also published elsewhere earlier, but that information is not given in *Kozi Tiyran Derd*.) Salih wrote «Returning» in 1988 and *Sovet Ozbekistan*; and *Prayda Vostoka* published it in January 1989. He wrote «A Difficult Way of Awakening in early 1989 and it was published by the Moscow journal *Druzhba Narodov* in June of the same year. Salih wrote the letter to Yuscopov in January 1989. All five works were published in *Kozi Tiyran Derd* in 1990.

The first theme of the period is the reinterpretation of Uzbek history and the rehabilitation of Uzbek writers. Under glasnost, some Uzbek writers had come to demand a reassessment of Uzbek historical figures. However, authorities did not always agree that Uzbek history should be celebrated. In 1986, Usmankhojaev (who was appointed first secretary after Rashidov's death) said that idealization of the past, including Timur,[5][7] disoriented the national pride of the people and damaged «internationalist education» (Sheehy 1986a). But with the advent of glasnost, leaders had to decide how to deal with works written in the 1920s and 1930s which had previously been banned as «nationalistic» works. In 1987, bowing to public pressure, Usmankhojaev established a commission to study Fitrat and Cholpan's literary legacy, and select their most «ideologically and Timur, born in 1336, ruled much of the known world until his death in 1405, including India, Afghanistan, much of what later formed the Soviet Union, Turkey, and much of the Middle East Uzbeks consider him one of their great heroes.

24 artistically sound» works for publication. Finally, in 1988, some of Fitrat and Cholpan's writings were republished but with notes stating they had committed «nationalistic» errors and «mistakes» because they had failed to acquire a Marxist-Leninist world view (Soper 1988b). As «nationalists,» Cholpan, Fitrat and others had been labeled enemies of the state and executed. Thus, from fear of encouraging «nationalist» attitudes, the official assessment in the 1980s of such Uzbek writers of the 1920s and 1930s remained basically negative. This is perhaps because Usmankhojaev was determined to tolerate no ideological laxity in the literary sphere (Sheehy, 1985). One Uzbek professor noted that it was not so important that works of Fitrat and Cholpan be published-rather, current literary writers' works needed to be published and the injustice to them rectified (Soper 1987). In addition to the rehabilitation of writers, Uzbek history was reinterpreted during the latter 1980s. Salih himself urged the study of the ancient Turkic script, stressing that the cultural heritage of Uzbeks had its origins in Turkic as opposed to Arabic or Persian culture. He also called for Western and Eastern scholars to pay more attention to the historical achievements of the Turkic people (Bohr 1988b).

Three of Salih's articles address the first theme of the period, the rehabilitation of Uzbek literature and authors and the reinterpretation of history of the 1920s and 1930s. These three pieces are: «The Speech Read in the October 1986 Plenum of the Writer's Union of Uzbekistan,» «Returning» and «A Difficult Way of Awakening.» In these, Salih discusses the rehabilitation of Usman Nasir, Cholpan, Fitrat, and Behbudiy, all important Uzbek writers killed in the 'Stalinist' purges of the 1930s. He acquaints Uzbeks with both these writers and their works, thereby encouraging Uzbeks to be better educated about their own literary heritage. Salih specifically mentions that Fitrat's works were still not published when Salih wrote «Awakening» in 1989, although he states that the government had agreed to do so. He writes of Nasir more than the others, placing him alongside Cholpan as a great poet, perhaps because Nasir was only twenty-four years old when he was executed. In «Awakening» Salih writes, 'It seems the reason for his [Nasir's] arrest was the words, 'the so-called leader usually is an ordinary person like comrade Stalin; he very much resembles our neighbor, our boot maker.' The poet paid for this joke with his own life» (181).

Salih addresses the issue of 'nationalism' as it pertains to the rehabilitation of Uzbek writers of the 1920s and 1930s in «Returning.» He writes that a 'feast' in Stalin's honor sacrificed «the intellectuals who are considered to be our countries' flowers» (161). Sacrificed at this «feast» were Cholpan, Qadiriy, and Fitrat, all 'nationalists' according to Stalin. Salih asks if Nasir was also a nationalist. He writes that those in the 'department of repression' say a poet loves his own language, his own culture. He is proud of the history of his nation. So, therefore such a person cannot be a nationalist» (161). Yet Nasir and other Uzbek writers were labeled «nationalists» and executed.

One portion of «Awakening» is devoted to the Stalinist period of repression in the 1930s. Salih writes that in the late 1980s Uzbeks praised the courage of writers of the 1930s who loved to write the truth and hated the revering of dogmatism. Yet, there were few writers who dared to write truth at that time; Salih says, «we were supposed to see the courage of these few writers. In a country of many millions, there were extremely few» (181). The reason there were so few is that, «writing against Stalin's regime was equivalent to shooting a bullet directly at Stalin. Those who dared to do this were few because those who wrote against the regime were immediately shot, and those who were able to write were left to rot in prison» (181). Those who 'remained safe' from Stalin were probably those who did not write anything which declared the truth, writes Salih. Stalin, he adds, was the worst of the three Soviet leaders (Stalin, Khrushchev, and Brezhnev). He, «placed ethical morals below political ideology. His ideology renamed one who spied as a patriot, and the person who refused to be a spy was denounced as a betrayer of the homeland» (183). Salih sums it up by saying, «a society whose ethical standards are unsteady ... will influence literature and the cultural front» (183)."

In «The Speech Read in the October Plenum,» Salih discusses Moscow's referring to the activities of Uzbek writers of the 1920s and 1930s revealing «guruhbazlik» (clannishness) and defines it as: «an association of one group of 'dogmatic people' who attempt to cause you to submit to the opinion of the majority for their own benefit" (131). Salih writes that lie revolted against this 'clannishness' in an open letter to the Writers' Union, in which he stated that Moscow was still

keeping the creative works of Uzbek writers of the 1920s and 1930s under a ban. He describes the effect the ban had on literature in the open letter to the Writers' Union, which he quotes in «The Speech Read in the October Plenum».

Under the influence of this clannishness, the literary climate of our republic sharply deteriorated. Pressure against language and the arts strengthened. In the newspaper «Sovet Ozbekistan,» a large article was published concerning ideology. In this article there is not any word about art. Therefore, any kind of literary work is dead without art. As if this were lacking, a many literary storied censorship appeared. Beginning with the junior literary worker of the newspaper up to the instructions of the Central Committee--all became censors. Even Shakespeare, who is translated into Uzbek, could not escape their scissors. They even edited him. (132)

The result of this open letter, Salih writes, was that the tables were turned; Moscow put the name «clannishness» on those who signed the open letter along with him.

The result of this open letter, Salih writes, was that the tables were turned; Moscow put the name «clannishness» on those who signed the open letter along with him.

Yes, 'clannishness' which we struggled against put its own seal on us. One must recognize that this was a beautiful punishment for us. Each of the writers who put their signatures on the letter and afterwards did not deny it, knew they would not receive any reward for their courage. None of them put their signature to this letter for publishing more books or for increasing their authority. . . . They in their own letters attracted attention, demanding justice regarding the generation of the '20s of our literature. They went against the violence toward our mother tongue which our ancestors spoke, against our language spoken by us and our children.(132) Such thinking, Salih writes, is not clannishness, but «the voice against [emphasis not in original] clannishness» (132).

Again, in these articles, Salih challenges his fellow Uzbeks not only to think for themselves, but to turn back to their history, language, and traditions. He says that because of threats on their lives, many earlier Uzbek writers wrote according to the dictates of the central government. Their writing, Salih states, is «politicized literature.» In «Awakening»\* he writes, «mostly we accepted politicized literature as 'national patriotism'. ... In past years our literature went through the process of politicization. This did not benefit us but damaged true nationalistic peculiarities, and today we are tired of not resolving these very damaging problems» (184).

Salih concludes by saying the same type of 'politicized literature' was nevertheless being written in the 1980s. He judged that, in the 1980s «if writers turn their faces to the spiritual springs of their own people's souls, to traditions, and to their mother tongues, this muddy flow may stop» (184).

The second theme in the period focuses on the ecological, social and health problems caused by the cotton monoculture. Moscow relied heavily on Uzbekistan's cotton, so in order to fulfill Moscow's requirements, Uzbeks terminated their practice of crop rotation and increased the use of pesticides. But this caused the quality of cotton to decline, and caused rivers and the Aral Sea to dry up. Education suffered (children worked in the cotton fields instead of attending school). People's

diets lacked meat and milk because land was used almost solely for growing cotton. [6]

Salih argues that the overemphasis on the cotton harvest was the root of corruption and other ills, and that these would remain as long as cotton dominated the economy (Sheehy 1988a). He also complains about the unfair low price Moscow pays for Uzbekistan's cotton. He states for example that before the revolution a peasant could buy a cow with a bag of cotton; in 1989 the same amount bought only matches (Sheehy 1989). Salih says, «we have ceased to worship man and have begun worshipping cotton.

For the sake of cotton, gardens and pastures have been razed, villages have been destroyed, and people are suffering. That is what monoculture means\* (Nazarov 1989a).

Salih's work, «Health to Women,» written in 1988, clearly and boldly discusses the ecological and health problems related to the cotton monoculture. After fiat stating that he and other Uzbeks are concerned about these problems because Uzbekistan is their «vatan» (homeland), Salih lists some of the problems and bluntly states who is to blame. The border of our Aral Sea is in ruin, our males are being poisoned, our women give birth to deformed children, our young men are unfit for military service, children die, and poisonous enterprises which are rejected in other republics are built in our rayons. The cause of all this arises firstly from the moral decrepitness of the officials, ministers' selfishness, and our own intellectual lack of courage. (136)

Salih continues with powerful, bitter words, slamming the Communist Party for its hypocrisy, indifference, selfishness, and utter heartlessness. Yet, alleges Salih, none of the leaders has even a mite of guilt for his actions. Neither the central government nor those fired possess the courage to face up to the atrocities taking place. Even when leader's are fired, the reason given in the press for their leaving is that their health is deteriorating. Salih states that Moscow forces Uzbeks to fulfill the cotton plan even though doing, so results in the sacrificing of public health, and women even set themselves on fire. Salih blames the health problems and women's self-immolation on the government officials who force Uzbeks to continue producing cotton, although doing so is ruining the land and mentally and physically disabling the inhabitants. Salih condemns the Committee set up to address the Aral Sea problem; he states that writers could do a much better job. He also complains about the newspaper articles on the Aral Sea problem which have no independent direction and simply repeat one another.

The third overriding theme evident in this period is family planning. This is also tied to health and the cotton monoculture. Moscow tried to slow the tremendous growth of the Central Asian Muslim population, possibly fearful of their growing influence and power. They claimed that because the high infant mortality rate was high, women should have fewer children. They also stated that the rate was high because women had their children too close together. Economics was also part of the problem. Moscow claimed that Uzbekistan didn't produce enough to feed their large population, hence the need for family planning. Part of the economic problem was that children were often taken out of school during planting season and especially during harvest season because their labor was cheap. A report of May 1987 states that the previous fall 700,000 children went to the cotton fields in

Uzbekistan to work~ (Yet at the same time Uzbekistan had a high unemployment rate) (Artemenko 1987). Another article of the following year, also published in Pravda , states that child labor was supposedly banned in 1987, but again the children were out in the fields. The article condemns the action but does not give any hope for change (Artemenko 1988). A later report, also in 1988, hints that children helping parents in their work is a tradition in Central Asia, and therefore, management has a hard time discouraging the activity (Chernyayeva 1988).

Salih was one of the most vocal opponents of family planning in Uzbekistan. He dismissed family planning and rejected all reasons Moscow gave for it. He saw family planning as a deliberate attempt by the majority (i.e. the Russians) to slow the birth rates of Central Asians so that they remained the minority in society. He opposed the notion that the high infant mortality rate is due to women having too many children too close together rather than ecological and environmental causes (Sheehy 1988b).[7] He discussed the so called economic reasons for family planning and the right of Uzbek families to make their own decisions of how large their families should be.

Salih discusses family planning in «Health to Women and «A Difficult Way of Awakening.» In «Awakening» he writes, «we blame people who are lying to society and say the cause of the death of children is the high birth rate; they are concealing [the fact] that the cause of this tragedy is poisonous chemicals: herbicides, pesticides and defoliants» (185).

Salih mostly discusses family planning in relation to economics. He states that Uzbeks want several children because of the desperate economic conditions Moscow has put them under; having more children does not create further economic problems. The more children Uzbeks have, the more cotton (or other crops) they can grow and harvest and the more money they can make in order to survive. Salih and other writers emphasize that a policy should be implemented to improve the economic quality of life, not to decrease the birth rate (Carley 1989). While Salih does not favor children working in cotton fields and thus neglecting their education, he feels that addressing the child labor issue is treating the symptoms of the cotton monoculture and economic problems, rather than the disease. In «Health» he writes, «the family planning campaign was raised to a new level: if originally it was said that, ‘the cause of death [of children] is a high birthrate,’ then now the opinion being expressed is ‘a high birthrate will bring economic difficulties’» (138). Salih says Moscow is changing its rationale and «searching for new proofs for their own ideas» (138). Salih discounts this latest thought that a high birthrate will cause economic difficulties, citing a Pravda article from February 1988 which states that as a family becomes larger its working power also increases, because the children are also able to work. However, the writer of the Pravda article, Salih states, is only concerned with freeing the child from family labor in order to work in a private contrac~ which Salih condemns as inhuman because these private contracts are equivalent to slave labor for children. Salih states that in these contracts, children are taken from their families and forced to work long hours and receive next to nothing in pay. Instead, Salih states that, «one must free the children from labor» (139), referring to the children who work in the cotton fields instead of attending school.

In «Awakening,» Salih devotes a long paragraph to the financial situation of

the village population, at whom most of the family planning is aimed. The majority of farmers live in poverty, he writes. But Salih connects poverty to the cotton monoculture, saying that to produce one 'tsentner' (approximately 100 kg) of 'grain,' 1.6 hours of work are needed, whereas for the same amount of cotton, one works 37 hours. A grain farmer receives 62 kopecks for one hour of labor while a cotton farmer receives only 16 kopecks (186). Salih feels that if Uzbekistan were properly governed, the issue of population growth would not even exist. In «Health to Women,» Salih compares Uzbekistan to Japan, which has less than half the area of Uzbekistan and not five percent of Uzbekistan's mineral wealth. Yet 120 million reside in Japan, and have a much higher standard of living than Uzbeks (139). Thus, the financial difficulties of feeding such a large population are in large part due to the fact that most people raise cotton under orders from Moscow and the returns for that work are poor. If the cotton monoculture did not exist, people would be free to raise varied, more lucrative crops, the economic situation would improve, the soil would regain its fertility, use of pesticides would decrease, and thus the ecological environment would improve and so would health and the infant mortality rate.

More importantly, Salih sees large families as a fundamental fact of Uzbek culture, and he chafes under the notion that the question of whether or not a nation should grow is decided by others (Fierman 1989). In an interview he states, «we [Uzbeks] found the idea of reducing the birth rate inhuman. And we spoke about the incorrectness of this idea at meetings and at plenums of the Writers' Union. But so far no attention has been paid to our opinion» (Sheehy 1988b). He feels Uzbeks should be free to have as many children as they desire. When asked in the 1980s many children they want, Uzbeks answered, «the more the better (139).

The final theme of the period from 1983 to 1989, and one continued from the previous period, is the importance of the Uzbek language. Uzbek as a state language became for Salih the most important issue as the 1980s draw to a close. Despite this, or perhaps because of it throughout the eighties, Moscow still attempted to stress the importance of the Russian language. Russian was seen as especially important for military recruits and those not only in higher education but in all levels of education (Sheehy 1983). Thus, for the elite, fluency in Russian was required. In 1987, Soviets determined that there was a shortage of Russian teachers in Uzbekistan, and arranged for 2,000 Slavs to be sent to the republic with more to be sent later (Tractice of Sending . . . » 1987).

At the same time that the central government endeavored to reinforce Russian language policy, the importance of Uzbek language increased dramatically. In 1986, schools began sponsoring «native language evenings» for the study of Uzbek and other minority languages. This showed that all national languages were provided with equal legal bases for their own free development (Seagram 1986). By 1988, Uzbek government officials began discussing whether classical Uzbek language could be taught in the Uzbek schools. They discovered that few scholars could read the Arabic script of the ancient manuscripts, and suddenly some began to wonder what value the old documents had (Soper 1988a). The importance of Uzbek increased even further in 1989 as officials discussed the adoption of Uzbek as a state language in the legislature. However, they still emphasized Russian as the language of interethnic communication («Uzbek Language 1989). Uzbeks fought not only for the Uzbek language but also against the imposition of Russian tradition. By the end

of 1988, Uzbeks demanded that Russian place names be replaced by names which at least had a direct connection with the person being commemorated. As someone pointed out, how many hotels are there in Moscow and Leningrad named after Uzbekistan and its heroes? Uzbeks also rebelled against using Russian names when a native equivalent existed, calling it 'False internationalism» (Critchlow 1989b).

The theme of «Letter to the Academic Erkin Yusupov» is the need for Uzbek to be the state language. Salih continues this theme in «A Difficult Way of Awakening,» and «Letter to the Academic Erkin Yusupov,» both written in 1989. In «Awakening,» Salih writes that there is hope for Uzbek as a state language. He states that although freedom to speak and write Uzbek exists more than ever, people are still wary after so many decades of fear. «Several years ago it was difficult to speak of a state language. Now today, we are speaking of it. This is because of democracy. But it seems that to get rid of the customs and habits is very difficult; even today, before speaking, we look over our right and then our left shoulder» (185). Despite this fear, Salih writes that 98% of the letters written to the language commission (headed by Erkin Yusupov) demand Uzbek as the state language.

Salih implies that the language issue is the most important of all issues for Uzbeks. With Uzbek as the state language, Uzbekistan would be for Uzbeks the homeland that it never was before, the homeland which previously they could only dream about. Salih challenges Yusupov and fellow Uzbeks to make the most of the present situation and press for Uzbek state language adoption for the benefit of future generations. He writes:

Our language must be the state language. This is not the wish of a 'handful of intellectuals' but perhaps all people's unfulfilled wish. . . Maybe today we are standing on the eve of one event in history. The position, authority and guidance will pass. But our people, our language, our homeland will remain. But let not our children curse us. (165)

He cites statistics (as he does in «Awakening») that 72% of the republic's inhabitants are Uzbeks, and only 13% are Russian speaking.[8] Therefore, «we cannot sacrifice our language for that 13% who do not know the Uzbek language» (165). Salih condemns the idea of «internationalism,» which he sees as the need to use Russian as an international language. He says Moscow always emphasizes internationalism, but it does not have «the value of one yellow coin» (165). Regarding the purpose of the language commission, Salih is even so bold as to write to Yusupov, «and if the commission which you are leading cannot fulfill its task, or if it does not wish to fulfill it, society is ready for the defense of its language» (165).

All five of Salih's works of the period from 1986 to 1989 demonstrate a much more open and direct style than those of the previous period which in turn reflect glasnost and perestroika evident in society. In 'The Speech Read in the October Plenum,»Salih himself mentions the dramatic change in attitude between that existing in 1986, when he is writing 'The Speech,» to that of seven or eight years earlier. He relates that he had written an article seven to eight years earlier dedicated to Cholpan's poetry. A co-worker then said to him' «Are you crazy? They will devour you! « (130). This essentially was a warning to Salih that the Communist Party would silence him for writing such things. It is important to note that Salih wrote «Returning» and «Awakening» in 1988 and 1989 respectively, both articles were published in journals or newspapers in 1989, and both use stronger language

and more condemning, blatant words than those of «The Speech Read in the October Plenum.» This demonstrates that Salih then felt freer to use clearer, more forceful words - indicative of the openness in society. Although he was less creative in using imagery, Salih's writing still flowed as does that of a poet. For example, in "Health to Wome he writes, «so then, they love the cool shadows more than the scorching heat of Saraton[9], and the luxury of their houses more than smoke from plants and factories» (32). Salih boldly addresses issues he considers important and which need awakening in his people. His themes again are state language, family planning, health and ecological problems, the rehabilitation of Uzbek writers and reinterpretation of history; and these themes parallel Uzbekistan's political development in these years.

The second period ends in the middle of 1989 at the height and culmination of openness. The demonstrations at the end of the period show that people of Uzbekistan had the freedom and courage to express their concerns over issues which had long been festering. Salih's writing also demonstrates the increased freedom of expression, and develops along with the openness in political events; he writes about issues present in the press and important for the time. The period ends here because, although the Uzbek party leadership adopted some changes proposed by supporters of Birlík and other citizens, the years following were mostly a time of increased suppression of the people and control of the media. The instigator of this repression was Islam Karimov, who replaced Nishanov as first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan at the end of June 1989. (Nishanov, who had replaced Usmankhojaev in 1988, was removed from his position during the riots.)



## Chapter Three - 1989 1992

The third period was one characterized by the increased control of society by Karimov's administration. The conflict between freedom of expression of Uzbeks, voicing their concern over issues like the state language and social welfare, and Karimov's continued control, increased. Karimov adopted some of the opposition's demands, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union in August 1991 and the war in Tajikistan in 1992, freedom of expression decreased further. And after Uzbekistan gained its independence in September 1991, Karimov became more «democratic» in his rhetoric but more authoritarian in reality, while Salih and the opposition went from working for change with Karimov's administration to total alienation in mid 1992.

Against a background of high unemployment, worsening ecological conditions, and virtually non-existent health services, the government nevertheless managed to reestablish order in the Ferghana valley in the summer of 1989 with the help of the militia and a curfew. Before Nishanov left in June, he justified his intense use of force saying that the scale of events made it necessary for all party, Soviet, and administrative organs to take such necessary measures. He stated that the clashes occurred because Communist Party officials did not have command of the situation and were not able to exert their influence in time (Nishanov, R.N. 1089). After Nishanov's departure, Karimov continued the heavy use of militiamen to maintain control. By the end of August 1989 he was also making sweeping statements about problems which he claimed he would solve: unemployment, the cotton monoculture, distribution of production, and the unsatisfactory social situation – no water and poor sanitary conditions. In order to solve them, Karimov stated he would start with firm order and discipline (Karimov 1989).

Although no uncontrollable large scale disturbances occurred in Uzbekistan after June 1989, sporadic and generally more peaceful demonstrations continued for the next couple of years. Karimov also cracked down on the demonstrations under the excuse of preventing things from exploding. He was fearful of losing the political initiative, and may have genuinely feared losing control (and his job as Nishanov had). In the middle of October, 20,000 demonstrators in Tashkent marched through the streets demanding Uzbek be made the state language («Yeltsin Addresses...» 1989). Perhaps in response to this and because of fear of further disquieting events, on 21 October, Karimov issued a presidential decree for the «stabilization of the sociopolitical situation in the republic» (Critchlow 1990). But in February 1990, news of demonstrations and curfews in Samarkand leaked out despite party officials denying any trouble and claiming everything was «calm and businesslike» («Party Official» 1990). Karimov issued another decree 10 February banning demonstrations and setting fines for those who disobeyed the ruling (Critchlow 1990). All rallies and meetings were banned except those in

enclosed areas («Ukase of the ...» 1990). Despite this, open opposition continued. In April, thousands demonstrated in support of those convicted in the cotton scandals («Thousands Rally... 1990). And, in May, another massive demonstration of 20,000 demanded the removal of the Mufti (the same one mentioned above) and the resignation of party leadership (Makarov 1990). In December 1990, a Moscow paper reported a mob of 3,000 demonstrating in Namangan (Artemenko 1990). The fact that Moscow, and not Uzbek news services, reported the demonstrations from December 1990 onward, shows that Karimov completely suppressed coverage of such events at that time. By late 1991, demonstrations were few in number due to Karimov's effective control. September 1991 is the last official report (given by Moscow TV) of several thousand demonstrating in Kokand calling out the slogan, «down with communism» («Muslims Hold...» 1991).

Ultimately Karimov was successful in eliminating public demonstrations. However, in stopping them he also thoroughly crushed opposition groups and thus consolidated his power. Shortly after Uzbekistan declared its independence 1 September 1991, Birlik members were unsuccessful in organizing a rally. On the eve of the event, Karimov ordered Birlik leaders arrested and their apartments searched. In the early morning, militia surrounded Lenin square where the rally was to take place and blocked it off. They even arrested a British television crew. Moscow radio reported that the event showed Uzbekistan's leadership did not want any dialogue with the people. The report also mentioned how hypocritical Karimov was (Usmanov 1991).

Karimov continued to reiterate, more strongly as time passed, that stability and order were the keys to solving the problems in the republic. In December 1989, Karimov stated that the solution to all problems lay in the consolidation of all healthy forces of society and that strengthening order and discipline was everyone's responsibility (Karimov 1991). After the March 1990 events, Karimov again made the statement that only discipline and order could help the situation and remove the crisis (In the Communist... 1990).

Karimov became president of the republic in March 1990, increasing his status from simply «first secretary.» In his first presidential address, immediately after the election, Karimov promised personal freedoms for each individual, but added that democracy did not mean anarchy and glasnost did not mean permissiveness. For that reason, he would firmly carry out discipline, and ordered the «thwarting of all anti social manifestations that threaten the political underpinnings» of society, life, and the dignity of citizens («President Karimov...» 1990).

Another part of his stability campaign meant that he allowed other parties to function, but within certain bounds not as an effective opposition. He also postponed economic reforms. At a Communist Party roundtable discussion in May 1990, Karimov said he could conceive of no force other than the Communist Party; this shows he thought that Erk and Birlik and others did not constitute a force which could offer an alternative (through Dialog...» 1990). By November 1990, Literaturnaya Gazeta reported Uzbekistan the most stable republic in the region. It showed «consistency, firmness and stability» with nationalism being the only source of upheaval; however, Literaturnaya Gazeta mentioned that it was being handled through «strong handed» government methods.

The price for this stability, they wrote, was the absence of parties and platforms.

Karimov was quoted as saying, "I don't consider this price too exorbitant" (Kruzhilin 1990). In April 1991, Karimov stated that the establishment of «the dictatorship of law» was needed. Order in society came. before anti crisis economic measures, he said, and he added that it was necessary to postpone measures that might cause society to explode, such things as privatization and price liberation (Yefimov 1992).

The outbreak of civil war in Tajikistan in the spring of 1992 was another incentive for Karimov to increase his authoritarian rule over the republic. Several opposition groups, a combination of Islamic, democratic, and nationalistic forces in Tajikistan, banded together to fight against the government one essentially set up and operated by Moscow. For months that nation was in upheaval. The opposition fought for a more democratic rule, legalization of opposition parties, freedom of religious expression, and other rights and privileges. They obtained some arms from Afghanistan and many speculated that the conflict was a move by Islamic fundamentalist groups to seize power and spread their authority.[10] Seeing the chaos caused by the opposition in Tajikistan, Karimov tightened his own control. He may have reasoned that if he allowed groups such as Birlik and Erk to call for public demonstrations, the same type of situation could erupt in Uzbekistan.[11]

Throughout this period, another important political policy which affected events concerned the Communist Party. Outwardly, Karimov changed his opinion regarding the importance and function of communism; although he stressed its value before the August coup in Moscow, he obliterated the Communist Party in Uzbekistan following it but only on paper. In December 1989, he declared his «unshakable loyalty to Marxism Leninism» C'Basic Directions...» 1989). He claimed the Communist Party was the «political vanguard of society,» and that the tragic events of the summer riots in Fergana were the result of the unsatisfactory state of the party in its political and ideological work (Chizhenok 1989). In March 1990, Karimov proposed amendments to the constitution that would strengthen communism and provide for direct involvement of the masses in working out policy and implementing it. He claimed that new political thinking did not mean they could abandon the socialist ideal (Karimov 1990a). Following the initial clashes in Osh in June 1990, Karimov again reiterated the importance of communist ideals. A published Communist Party resolution stated that its most important task was to increase its political and ideological influence among the masses and shape public consciousness on the basis of the «creative interpretation and development of Marxist Leninist teaching» («On the Uzbek...» 1990). In January 1991, Karimov called for further strengthening the party and stressed the importance of improving party unity («Addendum: ...» 1990).

Immediately following the Moscow coup, Karimov completely changed his tone, not willing to be associated with the Communism which was overthrown in Moscow. On 26 August 1991, Karimov resigned from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Orlov 1991). By October 1991, Karimov had disbanded the old Communist Party and had created and joined the 'People's Democratic Party.' Immediately after its inception, the People's Democratic Party already had 250,000 members from the former CPSU and an additional 55,000 applications of citizens not previously belonging to any party (Grebenyuk 1991 a). The goals, policy, and activity of the new party were virtually identical with those of the old Communist Party. Simply the name changed. TASS reported that the new party was the same

Communist Party, with the same people in power («Uzbekistan Eyes... « 1992).

Despite his authoritarian rule, Karimov adopted some of the opposition's demands and acknowledged some of their grievances. Several of these were issues Salih wrote about in the previous period, including family planning and Uzbek as a state language. Other opposition issues Karimov addressed were the anti corruption campaign, the importance of Islam, and sovereignty. At the time of his presidential election, Karimov stated that the issue of reducing the birth rate no longer existed and that he would work on a program to improve the health of women and children (Ata Mirzayev 1989). Concerning the anti corruption campaign begun by Moscow in 1983, by December 1989, Karimov had granted clemency to 240 persons originally convicted under the cotton scandals (Malikov 1989). In March 1990, he set up an investigation of those previously convicted of corruption in order to achieve full rehabilitation of those against whom criminal charges had been brought without grounds. Karimov declared that as of March 1990, an arrest warrant for anyone involved in bribery or falsifying figures could be issued only after a personal interrogation of the accused (Usatov 1990). Rashidov was also rehabilitated (Karimov 1990b),[12] and by April 1991, some 1,600 persons involved in the cotton scandal had their civil rights restored (Alimov 1991).

Karimov also conceded to the opposition on the issues of the declaration of sovereignty and the importance of Islam. In June 1990, Karimov declared Uzbekistan to be a sovereign state based on a program initially submitted by Erk (Fierman 1991).

Karimov also made a show of embracing Islam, recognizing that in a Muslim republic he should at least show deference to that religion. When elected president, he took his vow placing his hand on the Koran. And in July 1991, he guaranteed citizens the right of freedom of belief and the protection of believers' rights and interests. Religious organizations had to be registered, but religious educational institutions could be established, mosques were free to publish and circulate religious literature, and Muslims could take pilgrimages, study abroad, etc. (Grebenyuk 1991b). Also in July, he removed the Mufti who had been the focus of several demonstrations in previous years. The leaders of Birlik took this last event as a victory of popular force in trying to end state interference in religious affairs («Mufti Removed...» 1991).

The most important issue for Uzbeks to which Karimov acceded on 21 October 1989, was the adoption of Uzbek as the state language. The opposition was striving for autonomy from Moscow, and the use of Uzbek to replace Russian especially in schools and government was a momentous step in this direction. In the language law which was adopted, officials wanted to ensure that making Uzbek the state language did not infringe on the rights of other nationalities, but at the same time they desired to develop the use of Uzbek language in political, social and cultural life («Decree of the Uzbek. 1989). This is one reform which had broad grassroots appeal, one scholar writes, because Uzbeks could readily see the positive changes (Critchlow 1991). By July 1990, authorities replaced Russian bulletin boards and slogans with Uzbek ones, scholars compiled dictionaries of official terms, television networks reduced Russian air time, and companies developed courses for their employees to study Uzbek (Nishanov, S. 1990). Throughout the following year, the authorities continued to enforce the state language law as best they could.

Schools taught more Uzbek, and official policy rulings, governmental applications and all other governmental documents were encouraged to be in Uzbek. Whether they were also to be in Russian was neither mandated nor prohibited.

From June 1989 until June 1992, not only Muhammad Salih's writing but also the events in his life are closely tied to the political realm. He was part of the leadership of Birlik, he formed his own political party 'Erk' (Freedom), and he became a people's deputy of the Supreme Soviet and even a presidential candidate, actively participating in formulating changes in the government administrative structure. Thus, he attempted to use his influence to work for progress within the political system rather than just from the outside. During this time he apparently wrote no poetry or other fictional works. When questioned in 1990 about being a poet or a politician, Salih replied that he did not take up politics of his own accord. Rather, he said, life forced him to get involved. He stated that when a real political fight is taking place it is impossible to sit doing nothing and observe; «circumstances tear you out of your quiet life and throw you into the gulf of these passions» ("Uzbek Communist. 1990). What Salih mostly writes in this period are reactions to political achievements. This paper looks at one piece, 'We Reached These Auspicious Days,» written after Uzbekistan gained its independence in September 1991, and a few interviews published in newspapers.

Muhammad Salih became increasingly active directly in the political developments of late 1989 and the early 1990s. As a member of the Birlik leadership, Salih hoped to fight for change within the political system. Salih headed a less confrontational faction of Birlik which shared goals with the other wing of the organization but shied away from demonstrations, considering that it had more to lose than to gain by direct confrontation. The two sides made some attempt to reconcile their differences in November 1989, but in February 1990 Salih broke from Birlik and created the Erk movement. Karimov permitted Erk to become a political party 11 March 1990, after Salih, with the rest of Erk membership, demonstrated their willingness to cooperate with the Communist Party (and later the People's Democratic Party) (Fierman 1991). Salih, through Erk, called for Uzbekistan's economic and political autonomy within the Soviet federation, for human rights, and for ties between ethnic groups (Tukhvatullina 1990). He claimed to want to turn the republic into a state where citizens had rights to express their wishes and desires (Orlov 1990).

In the same month that he formed Erk, Muhammad Salih was elected a deputy to the Supreme Soviet. He spearheaded the formation of a parliamentary opposition which included nine other members of the Supreme Soviet (Bohr 1990). He commented that Uzbekistan did not have a genuine parliament; it consisted of incompetent people with a poor understanding of policy, economics, and the law (Salih 1990a).

His activity in politics continued, so that at the end of 1991, after Uzbekistan had gained its independence, Salih, backed by Erk, was a contender against Karimov for the presidency. He was nominated for the presidency in November, and, as a candidate, said he would work toward complete independence for Uzbekistan. He was in favor of a market economy, free enterprise, and the strict observance of Uzbek as the state language («Presidential Candidate...» 1991). However, despite his repressive policies, Karimov won the election by a large margin: 86% of the vote

compared to Salih's 12.3%. Some local opposition groups reported violations during voting, such as people voting without presenting an identification, and multiple voting (« 'Violations' Reported...» 1991). Nevertheless, observers saw the results as a sign that the country did not wish to make such drastic changes, and Karimov interpreted it as approval for his authoritarian policies. One Western scholar noted that Karimov's success was due to his control of the People's Democratic Party, intellectuals, and the entire population (Brown 1992). It is important to note that Erk had only a few thousand registered members and Birlik, which had tens of thousands of supporters, was never allowed to register a candidate, although it tried to do so («Birlik Movement... 1991). Clearly, Karimov used the split between Erk and Birlik to his advantage.

Involved as he was with Birlik and then Erk, being a deputy and a presidential candidate, Salih devoted his efforts directly to change from within the political system with little time left for writing.[13] Two interviews permit a glimpse of his ideas during this period. In an April 1990 interview with Timur Niyazav published in *Komsomolets Uzbekistana*, Salih spoke on the differences between Birlik and his breakaway party Erk. (It should be noted that the interview is not Salih's published writing, only his thoughts expressed verbally. Also, *Komsomolets Uzbekistana* was under some censorship by the authorities, which made a difference in what was allowed to be printed.) Salih felt Birlik was becoming too involved in rallies without its offering any specific solutions in dealing with the socioeconomic situation or cultural questions. He emphasized that Erk did not reject rallies but rather concentrated on developing programs to improve Uzbekistan. With regard to Erks role in the Supreme Soviet, he said that some Erk members had been elected to the Supreme Soviet and, as part of their program for change, had prepared a draft for a law on property and a law governing diplomatic relations with other countries. He commented that Erk was in favor of equal dialogue with other movements (including Birlik) and the Communist Party (Salih 1990b).

In another interview, published in *Report on the USSR* in September 1990 (and without censorship in the West), Salih's thoughts on the policies and goals of Erk were discussed. The main goal of Erk was Uzbekistan's complete independence from Moscow, which Salih said Erk hoped to achieve by greater democratization through gaining a majority in the parliament, as well as by working with the masses and in particular with the youth. Although not discounting peaceful demonstrations, Salih implied that participating in violence exhibits one's political immaturity. His thoughts concerning the strong conservatism in parliament were that if parliament did not strive for independence it would be necessary to dissolve it and call for new elections (Bohr 1990).

As a writer, Salih's impact during this period was much less than earlier periods. His writing was solely connected to political events. One politically important work during this period was 'We Reached These Auspicious Days» («Shu Qutlugh Kunlarga Yetdik»), which was published in the paper *Uzbekistan San'ati*. It was written in three parts: the first on 25 August 1991, in reaction to the Moscow coup on the nineteenth; the second on 31 August, a written statement prepared for the Supreme Soviet; and the third on 1 September, Uzbekistan's Independence Day.

One theme presented in the paper is that sovereignty and complete independence from Moscow are still a long way off. He implies that a state can be

fully independent only if it is independent politically and economically. He states, «today's independence re amis onpaper.» He writes that every so called 'sovereign state' (the former republics of the Soviet Union) must have its own armies to defend its subjects. Otherwise «their 'sovereignty' is phony.»

The second theme Salih presents is that he hopes democracy will be established in Uzbekistan. But he understands that democracy cannot grow Out Of totalitarianism. How, exactly, he expects the change to democracy to occur, he does not specify. He simply Writes, «we intend to cross over to a democratic system from a totalitarian and colonial system. A new system cannot be created from an old structure.»He clearly see freedom as an important goal, because it seems, if a citizen is not free, the nation1 cannot be free.»

Finally, Salih expresses the intent that Erk will serve to facilitate changes toward true independence and democracy. He does not trust or rely on changes within Russia to affect necessary development in Uzbekistan. He states, «people must only save themselves and their own people.» He considers it the opposition's duty to challenge the government to further democracy when he states, «the opposition asks this question: 'The nation is naked and open, criminality is increasing, the economic crisis is deepening; what are you doing for democracy?''»

Salih concludes by celebrating Uzbekistan's independence day. He recalls Uzbeks of the past, even as far back as the 1860s, who fought and gave their lives struggling for such a day as 1 September 199 1. Thus, he gives credit for independence not just to the fall of communism in Moscow, but to those in Uzbelttitan's history who continued to think independently and fight for their independent rights. To close, he quotes one of his own poems written in 1984:

Allah created you to sing about roses,  
 All talents are seen in you  
 It fits you, looking at the sky  
 If you say, «This sky is mine!»  
 If it fits you, if you say the earth is «mine»  
 Because saying this you do not lie.  
 While writing the poem with the line this land is mine  
 Never will you doubt like me.  
 If you say: «This homeland is mine»  
 No person will stand and say to you «It is a lie!»  
 Because you are telling the truth, again and again,  
 Saying this, you never weep like me  
 because from my eyes blood, not tears flow.

In this poem Salih honors those who were able to claim Uzbekistan as their homeland, calling it their own. Salih himself seems to have doubted that the land really was their Own, though he admits that those who believed it were telling the truth. And Salih weeps intensely from deep within, perhaps because he cannot really believe that the land is yet their own. Or perhaps he weeps because those

who think the land is their own cannot see or experience the pain Salih does. Salih recognizes that although Uzbekistan truly is the Uzbeks' homeland and some can say «this land is mine,» Uzbekistan is being ruled by others. Salih does not consider this independence in 1991 as a final achievement, but rather, only the beginning. He writes that Uzbekistan has attained the beginnings of independence; «today we say, 'this land is mine,' and no one objects. Today we walk lifting up our heads, we are a nation.»

The period from mid 1989 to mid 1992 is one of intense political change. Openness in demonstrations gradually gave way to increased repression under Karimov's authoritarian rule. Although some positive changes were made, such as the adoption of Uzbek as the state language and independence, Uzbeks on the whole had much less freedom at the end of the period than at the beginning. No advances were made for bettering the economy, aiding the health care system, or dealing with the other problems caused by the cotton monoculture. These fell by the wayside, and Uzbeks' hope for any positive changes became dimmer when the Soviet Union collapsed. Muhammad Salih, as ever involved with political developments, immersed himself instead in the political process as a founder of a political party, a Supreme Soviet deputy, and a presidential candidate. What began with hopeful expectantations in the independent Uzbekistan he had long dreamt of, and with participation in the political process and working for democracy, ended in bitter disillusionment when Karimov finally tightened all the screws on the opposition and forced Salih underground in mid 1992. His writings in this period are few, reflecting his resignation from the Writer's Union, his involvement in politics, but most importantly, Karimov's tight censorship. But they, along with his political ideals expressed through the political party Erk, in which he was heavily involved, parallel the political development of the period.



## Chapter Four 1992 Early 1995

The final period, from the summer of 1992 to early 1995, is one of continued intense repression by Karimov. His policy of «stability no matter what the cost» meant beatings, arrests, control of the media and a «new» KGB whose tactics are likened by Salih and others to those of Stalin.' In late spring of 1992, after observing the chaos in Tajikistan, Karimov solidified his authoritarian rule. In April, he forced the closing of the Birlik headquarters. In June, a former leader of Birlik was detained, arrested, and beaten; Salih resigned from his position as deputy and Erk went underground (Mustafayev 1992). In August, Karimov declared parliament had the power to curtail the power of any deputy prior to the expiration of his term of office. Any utterance by a deputy against a policy promoted by the country's leadership could be interpreted as destabilizing and thus cause for a deputy to be «released» from his duties (Novoprudskiy 1992). In September, the government confiscated Erk's bank account (Brown 1993), and, in that same that month, Nezavisimaya Gaze reported an escalation of violence in Uzbekistan in the form of repression and persecution against democratic forces (Rotar 1992).

As ever in his life and writing, Salih was caught up in political events in this period intensely so. As stated above, Salih resigned as a deputy of the Supreme Soviet in June 1992 and he and his opposition party Erk went underground. Shortly thereafter, Karimov put such extreme pressure on him that Salih felt it necessary to flee for his life. He made his way across the border to Turkmenistan, then to Iran, and finally to Turkey, arriving before the end of the year. His dream of an independent, democratic Uzbekistan lay shattered at least for a time. Thus, this period begins with Salih's flight from the country. Salih wrote one major work in September 1993 while in Istanbul '7oward Happier Days,» which members of the opposition in Uzbekistan published and distributed underground in late 1993. Again demonstrating Karimov's control, the press inside Uzbekistan would not publish it. '7oward Happier Days» speaks of Karimov's oppressive so administration, calling it a 1 revision of the old Stalinist power. Salih also discusses Uzbekistan's domestic and foreign policy as well as Erk's ideology and proposed reforms.

Karimov continued his crackdown On all opposition groups, and curtailment of freedom of the press and personal rights and freedoms, under the guise of stability. Few reports of any opposition to Karimov filtered out through official Uzbekistan papers because Karimov controlled the press. Karimov even banned some Russian papers previously distributed in Uzbekistan. An Izvestiya article, written in November 1992 about censorship in Uzbekistan, undermined, in the author's eyes, Karimov's credibility as a democratic ruler, and Karimov's reaction to the article proves its validity. The article states, «laws in any democratic country, and Uzbekistan says it is a democratic country, envisage penalties for infringement on the freedom of information. They outlaw censorship (Government Censors...»

1992). Not surprisingly, but ironically, this was an issue of *Izvestiya* which Karimov banned from publication and distribution in Uzbekistan. Later, in response to *Izvestiya's* protest over the ban, the government of Uzbekistan responded by insisting the action was not censorship, but «worker control» (Alimov 1992). A year later, another *Izvestiy* article entitled «Journalists Taught What to Write» described how Uzbekistan reporters were instructed to write articles supporting acts of the government administration, rather than «stirring up» situations. Notably, Russian journalists were not invited to these meetings («Journalists Taught...» 1993).

Despite increased control of the Uzbek press, some news filtered out of arrests, beatings, and other violations of human rights. In December 1992, some Birlik, Erk and other opposition members tried to attend an International Human Rights Conference in the capital of neighboring Kirghizstan, but were arrested by members of Uzbekistan's militia (Brown 1993). One man, who after being released went to Moscow and stayed there, said he could go back to Uzbekistan in principle, but he would be killed or imprisoned if he did (Pulatov 1993). In March 1993, a member of Birlik sent a letter to the House of Representatives in Washington, DC giving the names of people who had been arrested on false charges in recent months and pleaded for the United States to put political pressure on Karimov («Human Rights...» 1993). In May 1993, a *Novoye Vremya* article likened Karimov's National Security Service to the KGB, and described hotel searches, visitors in the middle of the night, and other events reminiscent of the Stalinist regime. The article also stated that any person who distributed *Izvestiya* in Uzbekistan was put in jail while, *Novoye Vremya* itself was under a ban (Kalinkin 1993). Other reports, but not from the Uzbek press, described arrests on trumped up charges, torture methods, harassment, intimidation, and detentions.[14]

Karimov's published statements regarding his rule were meant to justify his repression and reiterate his concern over losing control of the situation. In a March 1993 statement, he charged the opposition with trying to gain power through force and terror. Their goal, he stated, is to take control of the activity of the legal state and public organizations, yet they do not have «positive proposals» to make life easier for the people (Karimov 1993a). He ignored policies Salih proposed through Erk about privatization, health care, and other issues, not to mention Birlik's suggestions made both before and after being officially shut down. In response to queries about his control of the press, Karimov stated that international laws exist, and that is why some journalists are not allowed entry visas. And as for the closing of newspapers, Karimov responded saying he had nothing to do with that (Karimov 1993a). In May 1993, he publicly reaffirmed that democratic processes were under way in the republic (Karimov 1993b). The «Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan,» published in May 1994, actually gave citizens the «right to carry out their own public actions in the form of rallies, meetings, and demonstrations... («Law of the Republic...» 1994). However, at this same time other information filtered out such as that mentioned above. Clearly, official statements did not reflect the reality of the situation.

In October 1993, Erk was required to re register as a political party, but its application was refused. All Birlik activity was completely banned in February 1993 (Franklin 1994). Yet throughout this time, opposition forces continued to do as much as they could to put pressure on Karimov's regime for more freedom for

example, by taking part in the Human Rights Conference in Kirghizstan. In its own paper, Erk published an article in January 1994 which described possible steps to ease the worsening economic situation: beginning the process of land privatization; electing officials according to their qualifications; evaluating officials' work periodically; and punishing anyone who accepts a bribe. Furthermore, it advocated complete religious freedom for citizens («To Readers... 1994). Erk also published discussions of their fourth party congress (illegally held in January 1994) stating that the basic function of the party is to ensure freedom of speech and freedom of the press. Erk still expressed its willingness to compromise with the government despite the fact that at the end of the congress Normumin, who wrote the report, claimed he was about to be arrested and was forced to flee (Normumin 1994).

Although in Turkey, Muhammad Salih continued to be informed of the political process in Uzbekistan. His writing reflected his disappointment over the entire situation and of dreams crushed. But he still had hope. While in Istanbul, he wrote a thirty five page pamphlet entitled 'Toward Happier Days» («Aydinlik Seri»). This is a major work which synthesizes his thoughts regarding the preceding four or more years. The publication consists of two main parts: a brief introduction written in November 1993, and a «Mektub» Letter) written in September 1993. In the mektub, he discusses some of the same themes he wrote about in his earlier work, such as encouraging Uzbeks to think for themselves, and he writes about Uzbekistan's new administration and the role he envisions for Erk in the political process. More than ever, «Toward Happier Days» demonstrates the interrelationship between Salih and political developments in Uzbekistan.

'Free' to write as he wishes because he is in exile in another country, Salih does so in Toward Happier Days,» as one who has tasted liberty only for a short time, then been crushed and battered into the ground as never before. Salih writes openly and bitterly, mourning a lost opportunity in this appeal to his fellow Uzbeks, but he still expresses hope for the future through the aid of Erk's ideology and programs.

The entire introduction discusses freedom with words and images which are impressed in one's mind, beginning with a powerful first line: «Free human beings often forget their own freedom, like forgetting their own eyes or their own body.» And he continues:

A free human looks at his freedom as a natural part of his life...

If your country is free this is a blessing; if your nation is free, if every person in it is free this is a blessing.

While a person comes into his own house and talks with his family, if he will not lower his voice, if he will not think about listening devices this is a blessing.

If security workers will not threaten him, if they do not put him in a car, and after severely beating him with a cane, if they do not dump him in a garbage heap this is a blessings. Today in Uzbekistan every thinking human is dreaming about such ordinary blessings. As our government writes, they want «only meat and bread» but perhaps they can also wish for ordinary human rights. (3)

Salih states that the Uzbekistan government promised simple blessings such as meat, bread and rice; it promised to put the economy above politics and to feed people. Then he adds, «but up to now people have not eaten until their stomachs are full on the contrary, people are daily becoming poorer? (4). Even the city

population, which lived comparatively well for the first two years of Karimov's rule, is doubting his attempts to make economics superior to politics, Salih writes. Uzbekistan's citizens now say the government must answer why the republic has not moved forward in the previous ten years, but rather backward:

True, of course, the day of reckoning will come, but this "answer" never will cover the replacing of the opportunity which was lost. We must inquire of the answer today, not «in the future» . . . today the answer [emphasis in original] must be asked from the cruel bosses who sit haughtily on the throne. (4)

That powerful introduction sets the tone for the mektub, in which Salih continues his bitter words. He discusses some of the same themes contained in his earlier writing. He also criticizes the administrative policies of Uzbekistan's government, in particular their domestic and foreign policies. Throughout the entire work, Salih emphasizes Erk's role in bringing the necessary changes for Uzbekistan to emerge as a truly independent and more democratic state.

In «Toward Happier Days,» Salih still encourages his fellow Uzbeks to think for themselves, a theme seen in «Letter to My Younger Brother.» He hoped Erk would facilitate critical thinking among Uzbeks, since Erk's ideological motto is «national awakening and an independent state» (16). Salih writes "... no one can persuade anyone else something which he does not believe himself" (16), but Salih feels that if he can educate Uzbeks to think they will begin to change their beliefs. He writes that although their independence was a gift from God, throughout the past 135 years of Russian and Soviet rule, devoted martyrs gave their lives for this gift, because in their hearts were feelings of conviction, for a homeland, and for freedom. And firstly, they had ordinary human pride» (21). Salih goes on to decry the lack of moral conviction and pride in the lives of Uzbeks today, among those who continue to endure the oppression of others.

According to Salih, a state cannot be built without an ideology. Therefore, Salih wants Uzbeks to think, so that an ideology will be created in Uzbekistan. The ideology Karimov 'built' was exactly the same as the previous communist ideology, Salih states, but with one difference: it follows the independence of Uzbekistan. He writes, «Uzbek ideology says, 'one must love the homeland.' The communist empire used to say this also. 'Independent ideology' says that one must value the historical legacy; communist ideology also mumbled a lot about this initiative» (15). He continues: « 'Independent ideology' orders us saying 'love the homeland,' but in order to love it, we must have a national consciousness. Who will awaken this consciousness in us?» (16). And thus, it is Erk's motto to get the people to think for themselves. Salih says this can be done through Organizations in the form of «cultural education, religious education, and historical, social, literary, language, or newspaper societies» (16). Such organizations, Salih writes, were beginning to be built in the early 1990s, but were "quickly closed out" (16). These organizations must be reborn, and the state must build its ideology on them only then can a new state acquire trust among the people, writes Salih. But, before a nation has its own ideology, it must be given political and economic freedom: «firstly, if a person whose ideas are chained cannot love his own nation, he cannot sacrifice himself for the nation» (17).

Salih puts his finger on the main problem in Uzbekistan that Uzbeks have not been able to create an ideology for themselves because they have no national

consciousness. Essentially, Salih says that freedom must come first, before any kind of ideology is in place. Only in citizens' own independent thinking and choice can they and their nation unite to create a productive political and economic system. Once this is in place, citizens will be willing to work within the system giving their loyalty to the established government. Clearly, freedom does not exist under Karimov's present rule. So Salih's hope is that Erk can awaken a national consciousness, getting the citizens to see their situation as it really is and work for change.

Another theme in 'Toward Happier Days,' very similar to one stated previously in chapter one, is opposition to Uzbek government control and domination, mostly because it appears to be simply a continuation of Moscow's authoritarian rule. Salih makes it clear that no political activity presently exists except that controlled by the state: in Uzbekistan today the opportunity of demonstrating political activity does not exist, in the street at home, or at work every place there is a spy, every day a new plot, a new investigation, a new punishment» (6). Salih criticizes the Uzbek government's hypocritical rhetoric when it declares Uztteldstan to be a democratic state. He describes a democratic system as one in which the system will throw out any strong racist or fascist, should he come to power. But in Uzbekistan, if «Toshmut» is on the «throne,» the whole state will be «Toshmut's» policy, or «Yeshmat's» policy, or whoever has power. Salih encourages his fellow Uzbeks to fight for their democratic rights; «now our nation must recognize itself as a nation equal among the nations of the world, and according to this, it must learn to demand from any kind of government its own fights» (22).

Regarding economic and health problems, a theme of Salih's addressed in chapter two, in 'Toward Happier Days' Salih writes that Uzbekistan's government is not concerned about people's hunger or their poverty but only with their discontent as shown in demonstrations. Salih continues, mentioning some of the same points he does in «A Difficult Way of Awakening.» He states that while wages of officials increase ten times, farmers' wages remain the same and they even go for several months without receiving any salary. Not only do they not receive wages; they are not even «allowed their own health» (30). He also cites poor health statistics, including the high infant mortality rate and low life expectancy (30). Salih's words demonstrate that, along with the rest of the Uzbek population, he has not forgotten the issues which affect people's everyday lives. None of the problems went away, but, with Karimov's control of the press, they received no attention.

In contrast to Karimov, who appeared to conform to Islam in order to present an image that would appeal to the Muslim population, Salih discusses current aspects of Islam which affect believers. He refutes the claim that a man wears a neck tie or a woman does not wear a veil, they are unbelievers; «Islamic educators have directed education always into the inner life of humans. Islamic elements are a belief in God and service of these beliefs; parajis and turbans do not [serve these beliefs]» (18).[15] He states that Islam is a courageous and fearless faith. Only the Islamic religion instructs one not to bend one's head to anyone except Allah. Only Islam calls one not to be afraid of anyone except Allah» (19). In writing this, Salih appears to use Islam in his own political way calling on Uzbeks not to «bend» their heads, or «be afraid» Of Karimov and his oppressive tactics.

Besides reiterating the same themes seen in his earlier writings, Salih presents

his thoughts on the policies of the Uzbek administration, given the new situation of Uzbekistan independence. Salih begins his discussion with a familiar subject statues. UnUe earlier, when Salih used statues as imagery, here he simply mentions them in reference to the past He writes that in 1982, while walking and conversing with a Russian poet in Tashkent, they passed Lenin's statue and the Russian wondered if they would live to see the end of Moscow's oppression. Salih's answer at that time was, «of course this statue will fall down, but I am afraid it seems that when this cast iron head will fall with a thundering crash, it will break the foundation of the palace marble into a million pieces»(20). Now Salih writes, 'I did not imagine that after ten years this joke would turn into reality. Because the Soviet empire looked so much like a durable "fortress," as if there was no power in the world which could make it fall» (20).

Salih condemns Karimov's administration as one in which leaders are chosen for their political connections and willingness to align themselves totally with the dictates of the president. Salih bluntly writes:

The government itself does not believe in the administrators; as for the administrators, they do not believe in their own government. Administrators who understand that their position is unstable are forced to think, of course, not about the state but about their own pocket. They use bribery, they do not try to do good work, because whether they do good work or bad work, their labor is not valued. . . . In this way they unwillingly sabotage the work, and as a result the state structure does not work, the rate of production is lowered, and this reflects, again, the financial situation of the people. (29)

Salih does not blame the administrators for their actions but implies that because of the structure and policy of the system, they are forced to do shoddy work and participate in corruption. In contrast, the state Salih envisions would demand «absolute responsibility» from qualified elected administrators, and anyone engaging in bribery would be severely punished. He writes, «the state will have the right, not only legally but morally for this, because the state will supply its own administrators with privileges and salaries where they do, not need bribery, and do not feel the need to destroy the law» (14). In this way, administrators would also be encouraged to serve their state. Salih understands that in a political system in which administrators are paid according to their qualifications and work performed, no need exists for bribery and the like.

Salih criticizes Karimov's domestic policy because it uses corrupt, oppressive methods and it follows the old totalitarian system. When Karimov came to power he stated that it was impossible to overthrow an old political system without building a new one first. Salih admits going along with that concept four years earlier and even closing his eyes «to the vulgar political mistakes of the government (24), until he realized that no new state was being built. (Many Uzbeks thought Salih's mistake all along was trying to work within the system as it existed, to change it, without first tearing it down so that a new one could be built.) Salih does not say that what he tried was wrong, just that in the end it did not work because Karimov was not willing to change. He writes that up until the elections in December 1991, the government took into consideration people's opinions to a certain degree, but, in 1992, the government had «the outlook of an enemy» (25). He gives the examples of how the administration banned Birlik, confiscated Erk's bank account,

closed five provincial newspapers and the Erk paper, beat the former vice President Mirsaidov as well as others, and imprisoned several opposition members. He states, «to say it in a word, Uzbekistan turned into a country of spies, investigators and procurers» (26).

Salih writes that much of the national budget is spent on policemen and KGB workers. Policemen increase because the number of people who dislike the system are increasing, and therefore, more people must be arrested and persecuted. Salih states, «so the government says it is controlling the dissatisfied, and that serves to increase the dissatisfaction» (27). The reason this is happening, Salih explains, is that Karimov is afraid. Salih quotes an Uzbek proverb: 'When a person's trousers are torn he is afraid of sticks» (27), which means 'if you are guilty, you are afraid of anyone and anything. «Today's regime's trousers are torn,» writes Salih. In other words, today's regime is afraid of anyone and anything, and that is why it feels compelled to control every aspect of people's lives.

Uzbekistan's foreign policy, as Salih describes it, is hindered because officials lack experience and training, and because it reflects Karimov's domestic policies which are oppressive and corrupt. Salih writes that money for foreign trade is going into individuals' pockets. Not only that, but foreign companies are not even interested in investing in Uzbekistan because the country has no firm economic policy and the entire system is "rusted" with bribery, nepotism and corruption (28). Salih gives several examples of how the Uzbek government is completely incompetent in establishing foreign relations or taking stands on world events. Salih writes that the government did not know whose side to take when the United States bombed Iraq or when Armenia occupied Azerbaijan. The government was not even sensitive enough to Islamic customs (though outwardly Karimov made a show of embracing the Muslim faith, Salih reminds his readers) to know not to have a celebration with alcohol while in Saudi Arabia on a diplomatic mission (33).

Despite the fact that Erk was not a legal party at this time, Salih still hoped it would be able to bring about positive changes in Uzbekistan. He defines and justifies the role of an opposition group within any government when he writes that the primary reason for an opposition which is a group that comes into being only if it is freely elected by the people is that it «. . . is needed for controlling the rule of one group or one party which comes into power» (8). He states that Erk's 'fundamental purpose is transforming the Uzbekistan state into a democratic state» (11). And to counter those who would tell him that Uzbekistan is already democratic he writes, «in order to build a democratic state it is not enough, in itself, to adapt a democratic constitution. The people of Uzbekistan are the owners of a democratic constitution, but this constitution does not bring any kind of goodness into people's lives» (11). An additional purpose of Erk, he states, is to transform hope for the future into actuality (8).

In his final words regarding the opposition, Salih reiterates that Erk has never been a threat to the government, and that it worked within the law. Erk supported movements directed toward the people's «peace and tranquillity» and had as a motto, «national unity» (33). Erk «. . . sought the path of reconciliation, but we could not find this path. Yes, the government closed the path of reconciliation for us» (34). He writes that Karimov promised Uzbeks freedom but instead gave them slavery. So, Salih and Erk now struggle in order to prove that «the Uzbek people,

like other people, are worthy of freedom. We are struggling in order to prove that this homeland, is a homeland of the Uzbeks, a great nation, the history of which is full of honor and dignity» (34, 35). Salih maintains that Erk is still struggling and expresses the hope that state administrators, workers, farmers, even the KGB, policemen and militia all free thinking humans, are struggling against the regime (35).

Salih concludes by writing that Erk has three weapons against the regime which the regime itself does not possess, and because of these «weapons, « the regime is doomed. These three weapons are: faith, love for the homeland, and the Uzbek nation itself (35).

Thus ends Salih's writing at least for the present. 'Toward Happier Days' culminates and synthesizes Salih's hopes and dreams, and in particular, describes the first four years of Uzbekistan's sovereignty. The work does not mince words, but boldly describes the situation. Salih utilizes no imagery or allusive words because he is 'free' to write anything he wants since he is exiled in Turkey.

Whether because of the influence of living where Turkish is spoken, or because he began to forget the Uzbek language, or simply because of a typist's mistakes, the entire work is sprinkled with errors in the use of Uzbek which even a non native speaker can catch. Yet Salih powerfully tells the facts in a coherent flowing, descriptive manner. He presents his case so well one cannot help but wonder that Uzbeks, if they could obtain a copy and read it, would be stirred to think of their own freedom.

In the fall of 1994, Karimov put pressure on the Turkish government to discontinue asylum for Salih. There have been reports that Karimov stated it was not good for their mutual relations if Turkey permitted someone opposed to the Uzbekistan government to remain in their country.[16] So, Salih relocated in Germany, where, as of 1995, he still lived. He has continued to be involved in Uzbek politics. In January 1995, the National Democratic Institute invited him to the United States along with the leader of Birlik (who now lives in Turkey), to state their case regarding Uzbekistan.

This latter period, like all the others, demonstrates how Salih's writing reflects the political developments of the time. Karimov tightened control even further, establishing stability at the price of everything else mostly citizens' freedom. He did not permit any kind of opposition to his government (except in early 1993, when he created an; opposition' party «Progress of the Homeland,» also made up of his own people), and those opposed to his administration he terrorized with beatings and imprisonment. Salih, irrevocably tied to political changes, forced first to flee to Turkey, and then to Germany, continues to struggle for the freedom of his own people and homeland through his writing and international appeals.



## Conclusion

The Political development of Uzbekistan in the four periods from 1977 to early 1995 described in this paper is reflected in Muhammad Salih's writings, and at times his actions. Interrelationship of his stories, Poetry and political works with the developments in the political scene throughout this time is clear. His writing changed in style and substance depending on whether government Policies allowed freedom or not, and whether he was in exile. In the early period, he had little freedom to express his thoughts directly, but as glasnost appeared, he enjoyed increased liberty. Because of this newfound liberty, Salih felt compelled to direct his attention to the political process and become personally involved. Not only did his writing style change, but his articulated views of Russians, what role they should play, and how to work for change in Uzbekistan evolved through the four periods.

In the first period, from 1977 to 1985, little freedom of expression existed in the Soviet Union. Salih demonstrates this by using much imagery and symbolism in his writing which is evident when he gives advice in «Letter to My Younger Brother» and in the three statue tales. Through this oblique style of writing, Salih makes it clear he is against MOSCOW'S control and dominance in Uzbekistan; its presence comes across as unwanted and ludicrous. He shows his disapproval of the central government and expresses the desire and expectation that Russian Presence will someday cease to exist in Uzbekistan. In the two poems presented, Salih demonstrates his love for the Uzbek language and how important he feels it is for Uzbeks to be able to speak their own language.

With the advent Of Perestroika and glasnost in the mid to late 1980s, citizens of Uzbekistan had increased freedom of expression. This openness gave Salih the opportunity to express his thoughts through writing in a much clearer, direct manner in the second period from 1986 to mid 1989. In his speech to the October plenum in 1996, he 63 calls for the rehabilitation of Uzbek writers and history. He addresses problems of economics, health, family planning and the cotton monoculture in «Health To Women,» «Returning» and «A Difficult Way of Awakening,» and continues to reiterate the importance of Uzbek and calls for it to become the state language of the republic in his open letter to Erkin Yusupov. These are all issues evident in society and mentioned in the media. Uzbeks in this period also began openly to express the desire to be free from Moscow's hand. The period ends with Karimov's appointment as first secretary in the summer of 1989, when public demonstrations, reflecting the citizens' means of expressing themselves and the openness of the period, reached a peak.

Karimov tightened his control on freedom of expression, especially of the press, throughout the third period, which spans from mid 1989 until mid 1992, as Soviet domination lessened to the point of the complete collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 following the August coup. Salih immersed himself in

the political scene as part of the Birlik movement, in forming his own political party Erk, in his election as a Supreme Soviet deputy, and finally as a presidential candidate. His writing, demonstrated in 'We Pass To Happier Days,» is political in nature, reflecting the changes in his life and those in Uzbekistan. Although finally independent, Uzbekistan was left to deal with its tremendous economic, environmental, and ecological problems on its own. The result was that, under the justification that it needed to maintain stability, Karimov's government closed off any openings for expression by the opposition.

In the final period, from mid 1992 to early 1995, Salih went from trying to work within the system for change, to being alienated and exiled. Karimov maintained absolute control of the press and of all organizations and denied personal freedoms, despite his pledge to the contrary. The economic, environmental, and ecological situation continued to worsen. Uzbeks had less freedom than in pre glasnost days and some even talked of the good old days» of the Soviet Union when they at least had money, food, jobs, and health services. Banished first to Turkey and then to Germany, Muhammad Salih's comprehensive work 'Toward Happier Days» still urges Uzbeks to think for themselves and to have hope for a free, democratic Uzbekistan.

Once a lonely, obscure statue, standing by himself in an alley with his ideas, Salih tasted the glory of prominence. But now, once again, he stands alone alienated. Perhaps Salih's own words need to be remembered: «a great person is always a lonely person.»

## REFERENCE

1. Unless otherwise indicated, Salih's pieces discussed in this paper come from a book entitled, *Kozi Tiyrän Dard* (The Watchful Eye of Suffering) published in Tashkent in 1990. Some of the individual pieces within the book were published in earlier years in newspapers, small journals, and other pamphlets.

2. These two poems come from Salih's books *Arzu Fuqarasi* (1990), and *Olis Tabassum Sayesi* (1986) respectively. Both are collections of poetry of earlier years. «Turk' refers in general to the Turkic language written and spoken in Turkestan in previous centuries.

3. \*References in the text of this thesis to particular pages of works by Muhammad Salih will be indicated by pages in parentheses. The full list of works by Muhammad Salih can be found in the Bibliography under ~ Sources.

4. For example , in November 1986 Paris AFP announced that 13,000 Soviet economic officials were fired during the previous year for abuse of power, and another 100,000 were found guilty of corruption and doctoring figures («13,000 Fired...» 1986). No doubt many of these were in Uzbekistan, as that is where much of the focus of the anti-corruption campaign was. In June 1987, Moscow Domestic Service reported one individual who, using his high office, systematically accepted bribes from numerous officials and gave bribes to others. He was sentenced to death by a firing squad (Court Sentences... «1987). Radio Liberty Research Bulletin also devotes numerous articles to the anti-corruption campaign. From 1984 to 1989 a total of eleven reports discuss it: RL 254184, 457184, 403185, 81186, 90186, 297/86, 249/87, 28188, 492188, 65189 and 324189.

5. Bess Brown's analysis is that the cause of these demonstrations was that Tatars insisted they needed more land in Uzbekistan to accommodate their growing population. That sparked their nationalist desire to return to the Crimea. The view given by the press was that Tatars were simply «hooligans» making trouble. But the greatest damage done, Brown writes, was the betrayal of trust by government and Party officials (Brown 1988).

6. Its full name is "The Birlik Moveent for the preservation of Uzbekistan's Natural, Material and Spiritual Resources" (Brown 1990b)

7. Timur, born in 1336, ruled much of the known world until his death in 1405, including India, Afghanistan, much of what later formed the Soviet Union, Turkey, and much of the Middle East. Uzbeks consider him one of their great heroes.

8. Gregory Gleason discusses all the causes, effects and notions involved in the monoculture in his article "The Pakhta Programme: The Politics of Sowing Cotton in Uzbekistan" (Gleason 1983)

9. In another Radio Liberty report Annette Bolir confirmed that family planning

experts still insisted that the high infant mortality rate was due to women having too many children without 3-4 year intervals. She also provided of the health hazards caused by ecological factors (Bohr 1988a).

10. Fierman discusses many of the same points Salih does in his article, «Glasnost in Practice: The Uzbek Experience» (Fierman 1989), including wage differentials, the importance of Uzbek writers being allowed to interpret history their own way, the importance of Uzbek history, the lack of Uzbek books published since 1990, Uzbek as the state language, family planning, and the need for water conservation.

11. Salih is manipulating statistics here. Much more than 13% of the population speak Russian although not as their first language.

12. Saraton is the hottest time of the year in Uzbekistan, from 25 June to beginning of August.

13. It is unlikely. Rather, that excuse was used by those seeking to defame the opposition to the West

14. Bess Brown discusses this phenomenon in her article, «Tajik Civil War Prompts Crackdown in Uzbekistan» (Brown 1993).

15. In January 1991, after some Birlik members wrote an «anti-Rashidov» article, they were berated for offending the «memory of the deceased and through it trying to create chaos and anarchy («What is the Nostalgia...» 1991).

16. It should be noted, that once he became a people's deputy in February 1990 he no longer worked as a secretary of the Uzbekistan Writer's Union.

17. See articles by Panfilov, Shatif and Tokgozoglu referred to in the bibliography.

18. A "Paranji" is a veil women use to cover their faces.

19. Personal communication from Khairulla Ismatullaev.







