

## FORMATION OF VIEWS ON FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS UNDER THE COLONIAL SYSTEM IN TURKESTAN

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**Abstract.** This study explores the formation and dissemination of foreign policy perspectives and information flows in colonial Turkestan during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It focuses on the dual role of the official Russian-language press (*Turkestanskie Vedomosti*, *Turkiston Viloyatining Gazeti*) in legitimizing imperial policy and the rise of the Jadid press as a vehicle for national awakening. The paper analyzes the geopolitical role of the press in shaping public consciousness, addressing cross-border conflicts, and balancing narratives on international relations. Using archival materials and contemporary articles, it demonstrates how competing information flows reflected and influenced broader colonial and anti-colonial ideologies.

**Keywords:** *Turkestan press, colonial information policy, Jadid movement, foreign policy, media in imperial Russia, Turkestanskie Vedomosti*

### Introduction:

Under the colonial system established in Turkestan, there was a gradual increase in interest among the local population toward foreign policy and international relations. This trend is evident in periodic publications, articles, and essays in the press. In fact, even before the full establishment of the colonial administration, members of the Jadid movement had already begun preparing articles to inform the population of the Turkestan Governor-Generalship and the broader Central Asian region about the international situation, developments in the world's advanced countries, and recent inventions.

From the 1860s onward, as the Russian Empire strengthened its rule in Turkestan, it began to make extensive use of the press as a tool for shaping public consciousness. In 1870, the newspaper *Turkestanskiye Vedomosti* was established and became the official communication organ. Its primary functions included disseminating government decrees, acquainting the Russian public in the distant region with life in Turkestan, and justifying colonial policies.

The editorial staff of the newspaper consisted primarily of military personnel and specialists from the metropolis. Their articles were dedicated to the economic, ethnographic, and political study of Turkestan. This publication became a key instrument in the Russian Empire's information policy. Although *Turkestanskiye Vedomosti* was an official publication, its pages regularly featured scholarly articles by prominent scientists and researchers such as N.A. Severtsov, A.P. Fedchenko, I.V. Mushketov, V.F. Oshanin, V.V. Bartold, N.A. Maev, A.D. Grebenkin, A.P. Khoroshkhin, N.S. Likoshin, G.A. Arandarenko, and N.P. Ostroumov. These scholars covered various aspects of life in Turkestan and contributed to the ideological foundation of the colonial policy. Among the most active contributors were military figures, particularly N.A. Maev and A.P. Khoroshkhin.

As the Russian Empire consolidated its control over Turkestan, it implemented a policy of centralizing information and managing public consciousness. In this regard, *Turkestanskiye Vedomosti*, established in 1870, became a strategically important source of information. Through the publication of scientific and analytical articles in its unofficial section, the Empire promoted its perspectives on foreign policy and international relations in various forms.

Although the number of copies and the revenue of the newspaper increased during the years 1899–1900, the administrative structure of the empire did not grant it financial independence. This situation corresponded with the principle of full control over the flow of information, a hallmark of colonial policy. Appeals by the newspaper's management for the use of revenues for their own needs only yielded results in 1901.

The articles published in the pages of the newspaper were related to the social, political, and economic aspects of life in Turkestan. Through them, the central authorities aimed to justify their foreign policy, to adapt the local society to the imperial order, and to foster a positive attitude toward its policies. In addition to shaping public opinion, the newspaper's activities served to uphold the Russian Empire's internal and external political interests in Turkestan and to ideologically legitimize its position in global politics.

Within the framework of its colonial policy in Turkestan, the Russian Empire also paid special attention to the establishment of official press outlets in the local languages in order to comprehensively control the flow of information. On this basis, *Turkiston Viloyatining Gazeti* ("The Newspaper of the Turkestan Region") began publishing as a separate edition from January 30, 1883—once a week in the Uzbek language and once in the Kazakh language. Initially published in 500 copies, its circulation rose to 600 in 1888 and reached 3,700 by 1905.

However, due to the revolutionary circumstances of 1905–1907, the newspaper's influence declined, and by 1910 its circulation dropped to 1,850 copies.

At the same time, the people of Turkestan showed great interest in independent newspapers and journals associated with the Islamic world and the Turkic intellectual sphere, such as *Tarjimon*, *Waqt*, and *Yulduz*. In 1884, 200 copies of *Tarjimon* were delivered to subscribers in Turkestan, and in 1916, it was recorded that the editor of *Waqt*, Fatikh Karimov, visited Turkestan to collect information.

*Turkiston Viloyatining Gazeti* held official status and was tasked with disseminating government decrees and orders, as well as providing information on the history, geography, and culture of Turkestan. However, even its unofficial sections were ineffective due to their complex language and rigid, formal style, preventing it from gaining wide popularity among the local population. The excessive use of Arabic and Persian terms also served as a barrier to accessibility.

Throughout its operation, *Turkiston Viloyatining Gazeti* was not limited to administrative and official sources; local intellectuals and enlightenment-oriented figures such as Zokirjon Furqat, Sattorkhon Abdug'afforov, Is'hoqxon Ibrat, Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, and Mirmuhsin Shermuhamedov also actively contributed to its information environment. Through their articles on culture, science, education, and social life, they fostered public interest in modern knowledge and the scientific advancements of the outside world. In particular, Behbudi's contributions to the newspaper played a crucial role in advancing Jadidist ideas in Turkestan.

These articles introduced new content and meaning into the flow of information and, to a certain extent, served as an educational alternative to the one-sided propaganda of the colonial administration. However, the publication of such articles was allowed only on the condition that they did not directly contradict the ideological policies of the empire, meaning they operated within a tightly controlled informational framework.

In addition to official information, the newspaper also covered local education, daily life, customs, and economic issues. This contributed to the development of critical thinking among the population. At the same time, these texts acted as an informational bridge between the local population and the government.

As part of this process, the *Ferganskiye Oblastnye Vedomosti* (Fergana Regional Gazette) was established in the Fergana region to control the flow of information. It included both official and unofficial sections and disseminated news related to Russia and foreign countries via telegrams. The newspaper's content was selected by central authorities and based on pre-

approved and secretively reviewed information, thus presenting a one-sided portrayal of foreign political realities to the public.

These official newspapers served as mechanisms aimed at ensuring centralized control over information policy in Turkestan. They were used to rationalize foreign policy and imperial interests, and to supply the local population with state-monitored information. However, articles contributed by local intellectuals introduced a degree of diversity into this approach, creating a limited but significant platform for national and educational ideas within the colonial information stream.

Alongside the development of official press outlets, from the end of the 19th century, Russian-language private newspapers began to emerge in Turkestan, including *Okraina*, *Russkiy Turkestan*, *Samarkand*, *Sredneaziatskaya Zhizn'*, *Russkaya Okraina*, and *Na Rubezhe*, published between 1890 and 1898. Unlike state-funded official newspapers, these publications operated under the influence of economic conditions and the prevailing political environment.

A common feature of these newspapers was their attempt to express independent views and cover socio-political issues more broadly, in contrast to official publications. Through them, the formation of the information flow in Turkestan and the impact of colonial policy on local society became more visible. These newspapers, in essence, served as alternative sources of information, often with an oppositional tone, outside of official narratives. As a result, editors and publishers of such outlets were subjected to punitive measures. For example, on January 9, 1917, the editor of *Turkestanskiy Golos*, A.A. Chaikin, was arrested. The 18th issue of the newspaper was published on January 22, but its activity was halted on January 24 by order of Governor-General A.N. Kuropatkin.

At the beginning of the 20th century, influenced by revolutionary movements in Russia, various party-affiliated publications emerged in Turkestan, such as *Molot* (1906–1908), *Novyy Put'* (1906), and *Tashkentskiy Rabochiy* (1913). These newspapers criticized imperial policies and promoted ideas for social change. Many of them operated clandestinely or had short lifespans.

Following the First Russian Revolution in 1905, a national press began to emerge in Turkestan. Distinct in purpose and content from both official and Russian-language private publications, the national press focused on promoting culture, enlightenment, and social awareness among the local population.

The Jadid reformers viewed the national press as a tool for progress and sought to disseminate their ideas through publications such as *Taraqqiy* (1906), *Khurshid* (1906), *Shuhrat*

(1907–1908), and *Osiyo* (1908). These newspapers published articles on social, educational, and economic issues. They were particularly influenced by the Russian press and the experience of *Tarjimon*, the newspaper edited by Ismail Gasprinsky. Despite their efforts, the Jadid newspapers operated for only a short time, as they were shut down due to their oppositional stances, strict censorship, and financial hardships.

Although the early Jadid newspapers did not last long due to persecution and pressure, they marked a significant event in the socio-political life of Turkestan. For several years, the Jadids were left without a national press. However, in April 1913, they launched their first newspaper in Samarkand—*Samarkand*, edited by Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, one of the leading figures of the Turkestan Jadid movement.

In general, the Jadids deeply understood the significance of national press. As *Sadoyi Turkiston* once wrote, “There are two ways to increase the number of people of ambition and intellectuals in the nation: one is to develop the national press, and the other is to send our youth to schools consistently.” The article further emphasized that the most effective and promising tool for material and spiritual development of the nation was a national press, asserting that no nation in the world could embark on the path of progress and civilization without its native language and a national press.

Like other Jadid newspapers, *Sadoyi Turkiston* was subject to constant surveillance by the authorities. Editors were required to immediately inform the Governor-General of Turkestan if the paper was perceived to deviate from the “proper course.”

Aside from state repression, the newspaper also suffered from severe financial problems. Initially intended as a daily publication, *Sadoyi Turkiston* was reduced to weekly issues and was on the verge of closure. In response, the editorial board appealed to patriotic wealthy individuals, writing: “Are we not ashamed that the 10 million people of Turkestan cannot sustain even three newspapers? When our 4–5 million Tatar brothers publish over 30 newspapers and journals and continue to progress, why are we in Turkestan stuck with only three newspapers, each printed in 1,500 copies? This can only be due to our people’s deprivation and ignorance. At a time when the whole world is progressing, the people of Turkestan remain asleep. While others have flown into the sky in airships, we still ride in the wagons of our ancestors. Seeing this, the pen refuses to write that Turkestan is progressing. If our wealthy support us financially, our editors with their pens, and the people by reading, we sincerely believe our newspaper will soon become a daily publication.”

In an effort to overcome financial difficulties, the editorial team organized a national theater troupe and toured the Fergana Valley. However, these measures failed to solve the newspaper's financial crisis, and on April 10, 1915, *Sadoyi Turkiston* ceased publication after releasing its 66th issue due to a lack of funds.

In conclusion, the national private press reflected the history of the Jadid struggle in the field of information. These newspapers played a vital role in transforming the colonial information environment and in fostering freedom of thought and political consciousness within society.

Under the colonial regime in Turkestan, perspectives on foreign policy and the formation of the information flow developed along two trajectories in the late 19th and early 20th centuries: first, through official state media aimed at legitimizing internal and external policy; and second, through independent channels, including both Russian-language private newspapers and national press initiatives.

The information policy of the Russian Empire in Turkestan was centralized and state-controlled, primarily disseminated through official publications such as *Turkestanskie Vedomosti* and *Turkiston Viloyatining Gazeti*. These newspapers and journals were intended to legitimize imperial foreign policy, guide the consciousness of the local population, promote positive propaganda, and deliberately portray colonial policies in a favorable light. By presenting international events through analytical articles, they attempted to justify and frame Russian foreign policy as both lawful and beneficial.

While the colonial information policy was instrumental in shaping public consciousness and rationalizing foreign policy, the national press—including the publications of the Jadid reformers—contributed to the awakening of political awareness, the diversification of information sources, and the development of public discourse. The Jadids, through their domestic efforts and foreign observations, addressed reforms in society, politics, and education, and established national press initiatives as a local response to global transformations in the information sphere.

Thus, the formation of perspectives on foreign policy and the information flow in Turkestan emerged as a contradictory yet complementary process between state-controlled official publications and the national press, driven by aspirations for independence. These developments became an integral part of the region's historical evolution, contributing to the formation of political awareness and the development of a culture of information within society.

In a similar colonial context, the British government in India had become increasingly alarmed by the direction of the local press. As early as 1886, Lord Dufferin expressed concern over the emerging activity of the Indian press, warning that native newspapers were openly expressing hostility and distrust toward their colonial rulers. He foresaw that if such sentiments were not curbed, they would ultimately threaten the peace and stability of British rule in India. His prediction proved accurate, as this issue gradually became one of the most pressing challenges to British dominance in South Asia—an issue that was clearly analyzed in the well-known journal *Imperial and Asiatic Review*.

Contrary to Lord Ripon's belief that “native youth educated in universities—including those engaged in journalism—would make honest and moderate use of their freedom,” the Indian press began to incite hatred and rebellion against British rule. The increasingly angry and hostile tone of the press led to frequent disturbances during religious festivals, public brawls, and insults directed at those loyal to the British Crown. As a result of the deteriorating situation, the British government was compelled to take strict measures to curb the influence of the local press.

Press freedom had initially been introduced in India in 1835, during the tenure of Charles Metcalfe as Home Secretary. At the time, nearly all journals were either run by the British or by loyal supporters of colonial rule, and vernacular-language journals rarely exceeded circulations of 200–300 copies. This “freedom” continued until the outbreak of the 1857 uprising, after which the British government imposed severe restrictions on the press. New legislation enabled the colonial administration to suspend local-language publications without prior warning, effectively abolishing freedom of the press for vernacular media. Many editors and publishers were arrested, and newspapers and journals were confiscated. Though the law was originally introduced as a temporary measure for one year, it remained in effect until it was repealed in 1868.

In the years that followed, the number of university graduates increased significantly, many of whom demanded: “You gave us education—now give us employment.” Naturally, not all graduates could be employed in government positions, which led to rising dissatisfaction. Many turned to journalism as a means of livelihood. From 1877 onward, the number and circulation of vernacular periodicals increased rapidly—particularly in Bengal—where young writers began to use the press as a platform for expressing their grievances. Gradually, anti-British sentiments became more visible in the media, and editorial offices began to function as the actual organizers of resistance, even targeting government officials.

“The situation demanded decisive action,” wrote a contributor to the *Imperial and Asiatic Review*, “but the British government remained hesitant on the issue of press freedom. Such a policy could no longer continue, so in 1878, Lord Lytton’s government issued a comprehensive order to suppress the vernacular press.” Under this law, editors and publishers were required to sign a bond agreeing that: “No speech, symbol, or illustration in local languages would be published or printed that could bring disrespect to the legally established government of England in India or incite hatred among different tribes, castes, or sects.” This law—referred to as the Acta-Baillon—initially produced positive results, but only remained in effect for three years. It was eventually repealed by Lord Ripon, who, seeking to gain popular support for his administration, lifted the restrictions. However, this decision had serious long-term consequences.

The article emphasizes that India was predominantly an agrarian country, with 72 out of every 100 individuals in its population of 280 million engaged in agriculture. The urban population formed a very small proportion of the total—only about five million people lived in cities—and were generally characterized as lacking in education and awareness, with several examples given to support this claim. Nevertheless, by the 1880s, approximately 350 newspapers and journals were being published in various Indian vernaculars. Most of them were weekly or biweekly, with only a small number publishing daily; fewer than 20 of them issued daily editions. The majority of the press was concentrated in Bengal, although the average print run per publication did not exceed 800 to 900 copies. According to Sir W. Hunter in the *Imperial Gazetteer*, the weekly distribution of vernacular journals reached 250,000 copies, increasing to 350,000 copies by the mid-1880s, totaling nearly 18 million annually. In other words, for every 1,000 people in India, 58 literate individuals had access to at least two publications per week.

However, actual readership is more accurately measured not by the number of subscribers but by the number of readers, which was estimated to be five to six times higher than the subscriber base. Additionally, in rural India, the tradition of public reading aloud for the illiterate was widespread, meaning that the real reach of the press was significantly greater than the print numbers alone would suggest.

By the mid-1880s, excluding religious publications such as *madrasah* journals and various pamphlets and collections, most remaining publications were focused on political issues. Among vernacular periodicals, the most prominent were the two Bengali newspapers published in Calcutta by the same editorial office: *Dainik* (issued on the first five days of the

week) and *Bangobasi* (published on Saturdays). *Dainik* had a weekly circulation of 6,000 copies, while *Bangobasi* reached 23,000 copies per week, making them among the most widely distributed papers in India. In addition to these, a number of other newspapers and journals were influential, including: In Calcutta: *Hindu Patriot*, *Bengali*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Reis and Rayyet*, and *Indian Mirror*; In Bombay: *Indian Spectator*, *Bombay Samachar*, and *Jam-i-Jamshed*; In Madras: *Hindu*; In North India: *Akhbar-i-Am*; In Lahore and Benares: *Bharat Jivan*. These publications were often small in format and contained such limited content that the entirety of a single issue could fit onto one page of a standard London daily newspaper.

Between 1883 and 1894, the number of periodicals sent through the postal service steadily increased. For instance: 1883–1884: 100 publications, 1888–1889: 150 publications, 1890–1891: 165 publications, 1893–1894: 192 publications. During the same period, the total number of mailed copies rose from 13 million to 23 million annually. It is worth noting that these figures do not include newspapers and journals imported from Europe.

Criticizing the activities of the vernacular press in India, *The Pioneer* newspaper noted that colonial administrators were under constant attack by periodicals, which was making governance increasingly difficult. In response to this situation, the *Imperial and Asiatic Review* proposed strict and decisive measures, advocating for a return to Lord Lytton's policy of repression and control. Reflecting on this situation, the editorial board of *Sredneaziatskiy Vestnik* commented: "If the days of British rule are to be shortened by the attacks of the vernacular press, then such a method of rule can no longer be considered sustainable."

While publishing intriguing information about the dissemination and functioning of the local press in British India, the editors of *Sredneaziatskiy Vestnik* aimed to draw attention to the potential dangers of allowing unrestricted development of an independent press among the colonized populations—who, in their view, had not yet reached the necessary cultural level and lacked internal cohesion as a society. Taking a distinctly Orientalist stance, the editorial board noted that similar movements had occasionally emerged in Polish and Finnish press, calling for regional autonomy. However, such expressions of independence were dismissed because the populations of those provinces were "civilized Christian nations," and therefore, such sentiments were considered to represent the views of a small minority. In contrast, the paper argued that among Muslims in the empire—especially under the influence of Tatar intellectuals—pan-Islamic ideas were spreading in a dangerous way.

In addressing the issue, the editorial board of *Sredneaziatskiy Vestnik* adopted a distinctly Orientalist perspective, arguing to its readers that, although ideas of regional independence had

occasionally appeared in the Polish and Finnish press, such aspirations were not considered dangerous because “the populations of those provinces are civilized Christian peoples.” Therefore, calls for autonomy in such contexts were interpreted as the isolated actions of a small number of individuals. In contrast, the newspaper warned that Islamic ideas, under the influence of Tatar intellectuals, were spreading dangerously in the region. It claimed that Muslims—by their ethnic origin, language, and religion—were entirely different from the dominant population of the Russian Empire. The editorial asserted that Muslims intentionally distanced themselves from Christianity, describing them as ignorant and culturally incompatible. “They are at a different level of development compared to Christians and, due to their religious intolerance, avoid close interaction. They do not intermarry with Christians, and even their most advanced representatives openly desire separation from Russia.” The article specifically pointed to the Tatar population of Kazan province, which, despite having lived in a Christian environment for nearly 350 years, remained culturally and socially segregated, much as they had during the time of Ivan the Terrible. It further claimed that similar patterns of isolation could be observed in Crimea, the Caucasus, Western Siberia, and more recently in the newly annexed Turkestan.

According to telegram reports from German newspaper correspondents in Calcutta, the British government had recently intensified its repressive policies against the vernacular press in India. The editor of the weekly Indian newspaper *Swaraji*, based in Allahabad, was sentenced to three and a half years in prison and fined 1,000 rupees for publishing articles that were deemed to incite unrest among the public. In a separate case, the editor and publisher of the newspaper *Kal* were tried in Pune, with the trial concluding on June 8. The accused represented himself in court and delivered a four-hour-long defense speech, arguing that the article in question had not been written to provoke dissent or encourage disobedience to the law, but purely out of concern for the future of his homeland. Despite the powerful impact of his courtroom speech on the judges, he was nonetheless sentenced to 15 months in prison for one charge and 4 months for another.

Meanwhile, a correspondent for *Berliner Tageblatt* reported from Constantinople on June 7 (20) regarding a strike organized by Turkish journalists, a report that was later reprinted in *Turkestanские Vedomosti*. On that day, no newspapers published any news about the Cabinet of Ministers meeting. The meeting had in fact taken place at the Porte, but journalists were denied access. Nevertheless, they waited until the session ended and asked ministers for information, only to receive a harsh and dismissive response. As a result, the journalists collectively decided

not to publish any reports about the meeting. The *Berliner Tageblatt* correspondent noted that this action by the journalists had no tangible impact and, in fact, worked in favor of the government.

In the press of Turkestan, the ideas of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism were frequently analyzed and discussed. Reports indicated that such ideologies were being disseminated to the public through journals like *Sabil ar-Rashad* and *Surat-i Mustaqim*. In particular, after changing its name to *Surat-i Mustaqim*, the journal focused heavily on promoting Pan-Islamist ideals. It was noted that the intensification of this ideological propaganda was significantly influenced by the war between Turkey and Italy. The conflict was framed as a “sacred war,” aimed at uniting the Muslim population under the banner of religion. A report published in *Turkestanskije Vedomosti* stated that the Ottoman government had even sent a representative to meet with Sheikh Senussi, the leader of a secret religious sect, to consolidate forces against Italy. The Russian newspaper drew its readers’ attention to the fact that the Senussi movement was fundamentally opposed to European civilization and hostile toward all non-Muslims. The Turkish press, while calling for unity among Muslims, anchored every article in citations from the Qur’an and Hadith, reinforcing religious legitimacy. Historical references were also frequently employed, citing the fall of former Muslim states in Spain, India, Turkestan, and Crimea as cautionary examples to explain the causes of Islamic political decline. The Russian imperial government grew increasingly alarmed by the possible infiltration of such ideologies into Turkestan, fearing that they could significantly amplify local resentment toward Russian rule.

Against this backdrop of international ideological struggle, the information policy in Turkestan was transformed into a centralized mechanism serving the imperial interest. The Russian Empire, through official outlets such as *Turkestanskije Vedomosti* and *Turkiston Viloyatining Gazeti*, aimed to shape public opinion, justify its foreign policy, and exert ideological control over society. Through censorship and the dissemination of state-sanctioned ideology, Russia sought to secure the passive acceptance of its strategic foreign policy objectives by the Turkestani population.

However, starting from the late 19th century, the rise of national private press within the Jadid movement—including *Taraqqiy*, *Shuhrat*, *Osiyo*, *Samarkand*, *Sadoyi Turkiston*, and others—offered a countercurrent in the information flow. These publications advocated for intellectual independence, increased awareness of global affairs, and the awakening of national political consciousness. The Jadids aimed to serve as an informational bridge between

Turkestan and the world, using the press to promote ideas of political, educational, and cultural reform. Thus, the international context of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was reflected in the information space of Turkestan along two diverging lines: The official imperial press, promoting the interests of the Russian state and the national private press, striving to awaken independent thought and spread enlightenment.

These two streams competed and clashed ideologically, forming a historical case of how information could be employed as a political instrument. In this contested space, perspectives on foreign policy and international relations in Turkestan were shaped and developed.

### Conclusion

The evolution of the press in colonial Turkestan reflects a complex interplay between imperial control and local aspirations for intellectual and political self-determination. The Russian Empire, through tightly regulated official newspapers such as *Turkestanские Vedomosti* and *Turkiston Viloyatining Gazeti*, sought to centralize information, shape public opinion, justify foreign policy, and suppress alternative narratives. These publications operated as ideological tools to legitimize colonial rule and present Russian external policy as rational, lawful, and benevolent.

In stark contrast, the emergence of a national press—particularly through the efforts of the Jadid reformers—offered a competing vision of society rooted in cultural revival, educational reform, and political awakening. Publications such as *Taraqqiy*, *Shuhrat*, *Osiyo*, and *Sadoyi Turkiston* played a crucial role in introducing modern ideas, raising awareness of global transformations, and connecting Turkestan to wider intellectual and political currents beyond imperial boundaries.

The growing influence of Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic ideas, disseminated through international journals like *Sabil ar-Rashad* and *Surat-i Mustaqim*, further deepened the ideological divide. These transnational movements resonated with Turkestan's Muslim population, especially amid geopolitical tensions such as the Italo-Turkish War. Russian authorities, increasingly alarmed by this ideological infiltration, intensified censorship and information control, fearing that such narratives would exacerbate anti-colonial sentiment and undermine imperial stability.

The resulting information landscape was shaped by two competing and ideologically charged streams: the state-controlled imperial press, which aimed to preserve the status quo, and the national, reformist press, which sought to inspire transformation. Their rivalry

illustrates how the press, far from being a neutral medium, became a potent instrument of both repression and resistance in colonial contexts.

Ultimately, the press in Turkestan during the late 19th and early 20th centuries served not only as a mirror of sociopolitical developments but also as a battlefield for competing visions of identity, sovereignty, and modernity. It laid the groundwork for the emergence of political consciousness in the region and contributed to shaping the contours of colonial resistance through the power of the written word.

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