

IMAM SHAMIL

The First Muslim Guerrilla Leader

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The Other Press
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A painting of the storming of Gunib, 1859 [*Rodina*].

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Note to this Edition

Islam is a panorama of many splendoured things. In its long history, it has produced many great men in all spheres of human activity, the like of which no other civilization has produced in history: just rulers who were God-conscious and lived the life of their poorest subjects, great philosopher-theologians, scientists, travellers, historians, Sufis and builders of cities.

No less significant are such heroes who fought against injustice and oppression to uphold the dignity and honour of the community. One such figure in recent history was the Chechen mujahid, Imam Shamil, whose story will be a source of inspiration and pride for Muslims of all ages and lands who are struggling to liberate their land from invaders.

The Other Press in cooperation with Islamic Book Trust is planning to bring out a series of books on the great men of Islamic history and civilization. This book on Imam Shamil and his struggle against Russian colonisation is one of them, and this will, we hope, give the reader a new insight into the nature of a struggle against far superior forces by oppressed people to deny the oppressors the fruits of their aggression.

In bringing out this new edition, we have to acknowledge our debt to Mr Zaurbek Musaev and Miss Hajira Qureshi of Save Chechnya Campaign, UK, for their unstinting help in correcting many names of people and places of Chechnya.

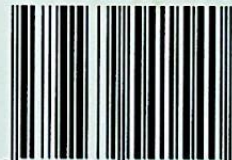
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The tragedy that overtook and continues to befall on Muslims in the shape of the destruction of their independence and power would have been sufficient to kill their will to live, were it not for a group of fighters who refuse to concede that slavery can be the destiny of Muslims. Muslims have continuously nurtured the sentiment of Jihad in their hearts. Imam Shamil's story of jihad against the Russians is a part of the same story.

Little is known of the Muslims of Chechnya and the occupation of their lands by the Tsarist Russian invaders. The Sufi movement in the Caucasus in the eighteenth century was not a Muslim cult occupied merely in chanting God's praise: their jihad movement led by Imam Shamil is an epic story of faith in God and a legacy that Muslims cherish, to be retold from generation to generation.

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