

Dwight Hall Peace Initiative

Emir Abdelkader Today:

A Conversation about the Anti-Colonial Struggle and Legacy of an Algerian Leader

Why is Emir Abdelkader relevant today? What can we learn from the anti-colonial struggle during his time in Algeria? What are comparable struggles today?

Tuesday, April 27 at 6pmET

<https://yale.zoom.us/j/92038133289>

<https://tinyurl.com/dhpi427>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/events/2184872134979876>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DwightHallPeace/status/1386085332416929792>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/p/COEM5bNrFow/>

SCHEDULE:

- 6:05 PM: Introductory remarks from DHPI; introduce Kathy Garms
- 6:10 PM: Kathy introduces AEP and the panelists
- 6:15 PM: Panel discussion
 - 15-20 minutes for opening questions
 - 20-30 minutes for group discussion
- 7:00 PM: Audience Q&A
- 7:25 PM: Closing remarks: getting involved in AEP + Fast4Yemen

MODERATOR:

Kathy Garms: Kathy Garms is AEP co-founder and board member. She is a life-long learner passionate about music, travel, nature, and building global community. As a USAID volunteer in Kyrgyzstan, Kathy experienced cultures and landscapes different from Iowa, which led to her interest in cultural understanding, citizen diplomacy and civic engagement. She revived Elkader's sister city program with Mascara, Algeria, strengthening friendships and building relationships between the U.S. and Algeria. Kathy organized the Elkader launch of John Kiser's biography *Commander of the Faithful* that inspired the Abdelkader Essay Contest and evolved into the Abdelkader Education Project. Kathy directed AEP's efforts and continues to expand its network at home and abroad. As a guest in France and Algeria, she participated in Emir Abdelkader celebrations related to Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. Kathy continues to share the Abdelkader Story with hope of a more civil world for all people.

PANELISTS:

- **John Kiser:** John Kiser is one of AEP's founders. He is an author, philanthropist, and entrepreneur. He serves on the board of the William and Mary Greve Foundation from which position he has been spearheading, for the past twenty-five years, projects to address America's dangerous ignorance of the Muslim faith. He is the author of *Commander of the Faithful: The Life and Times of Emir Abd el-Kader*. His other books include *The Monks of Tibhirine: Faith, Love and Terror in Algeria* and *Stefan Zweig, Death of a Modern Man*. John has an MBA from the University of Chicago and an MA in European History from Columbia University.
- **Mounira Kekhida:** Mounira is a history doctoral student at The Graduate Center, City University of New York. Her field is Modern European history with emphasis on Europe's interactions with the world. She is interested in Europe's intellectual, scientific, and artistic exchanges with the post-1492 world. She is also interested in the anti-colonialist voices in France.

Her dissertation is on deputy Amédée Desjobert, who was the loudest French voice against the taking of Algeria. It addresses the question: Why did Desjobert defend the Emir and the rights of the Algerian people to have their own nation? Mounira is half Muslim Algerian and half Jewish American, and spent her childhood in a small village outside Algiers before moving to Brooklyn.

- **Matt Peterson:** Matt Peterson is the Executive Director of Abdelkader Education Project (AEP). His career in the military enabled him to travel around the world to more than 30 countries where he experienced the conflicts caused by cultural ignorance firsthand. After retiring from the military, he came to AEP with a passion for resolving conflicts by building bridges between people with different backgrounds. In a 2019 op-ed in the *Des Moines Register*, he wrote that “I have always believed people should determine their country’s direction for themselves. I must acknowledge I have been part of a military that at times has been an obstacle to self-determination. I regret that.” Matt has B.A. degrees in Philosophy and Government from New Mexico State University and a M.A. in Organizational Leadership from Gonzaga University.

Opening Questions

1. **John** - Who was Emir Abdelkader? Why did you write a book about him?
2. **Mimi** - What impact did Emir Abdelkader’s anti-colonial struggle have in France at the time?
3. **Matt** - What’s the purpose of the Abdelkader Education Project and why did you get involved?

Groups Questions

1. What was Emir Abdelkader’s own education and how can we learn from him to create a more holistic education around global citizenship?
2. Can you elaborate on AEP’s mission to promote global citizenship?
3. AEP is based out of Iowa, far away from Algeria. Why is Emir Abdelkader relevant to Iowans and Americans more broadly?
4. What can we learn from the anti-colonial struggle during Abdelkader's time in Algeria? What are comparable struggles today?

Join the DHPI for an event in partnership with the Abdelkader Education Project on Tuesday, April 27th at 6pmET. Zoom link: <https://tinyurl.com/dhpi427>

The conversation will include:

[moderator] Kathy Garms, co-founder of AEP

John Kiser, co-founder of AEP and author of *Commander of the Faithful: The Life and Times of Emir Abd el-Kader*

Mounira Kechida, history doctoral student at the Graduate Center, CUNY who is researching French opposition to the taking of Algeria

Matt Peterson, executive director of AEP