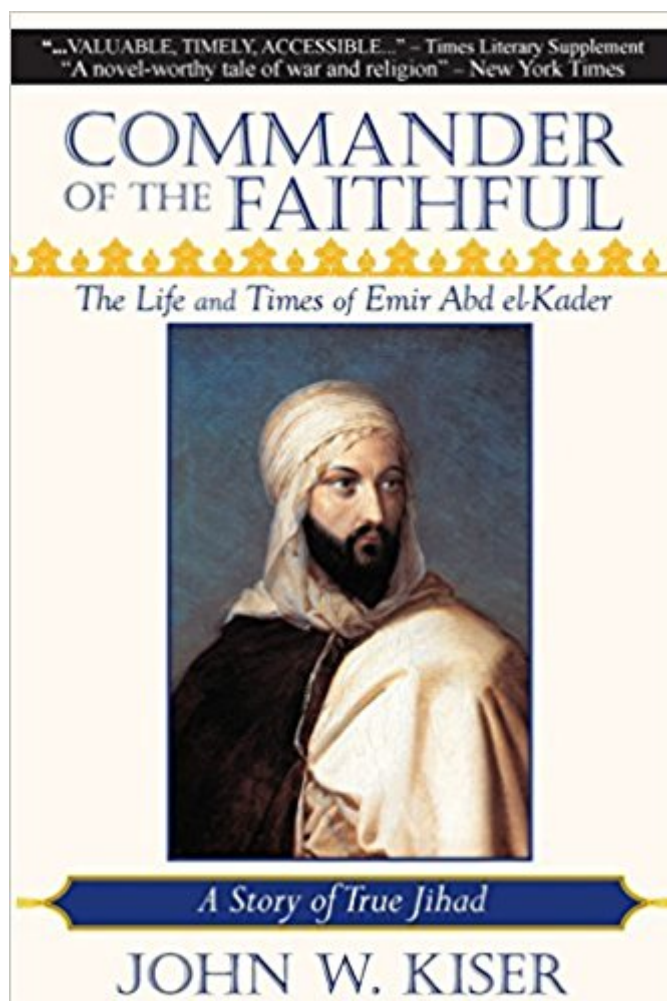


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# Commander Of The Faithful: The Life And Times Of Emir Abd El-Kader



## Synopsis

"A dramatic story . . . any number of episodes could inspire novels . . . impossible to read without thinking of more current events."&#151;The New York Times"A valuable and timely reminder . . . of that rare figure: a bridge between East and West."&#151;Times Literary SupplementThis well-researched and compelling biography of the Muslim warrior-saint who led the Algerian resistance to French colonization in the mid-nineteenth century sheds light on current US involvement with a global Islam. The most famous "jihadist" of his time, Abd el-Kader was known equally for his military brilliance and his moral authority. His New York Times obituary called him "one of the few great men of the century."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"...a dramatic story of quarreling tribes, of Sufi sects and brotherhoods, of treacherous Ottoman officials, rival French generals, secret negotiations, broken truces, terrible atrocities and new forms of insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare. Any number of episodes could inspire novels... But it is hard to read Commander of the Faithful without thinking of more recent events. - Peter Steinfelds, New York Times"...a strikingly good biography and an important one as well... the result of more than a decade of scholarly research." - ForeWord Magazine"...notable for illustrating that the meeting of civilizations need not always produce a clash." - Kirkus Reviews"...a valuable and timely reminder of a gifted man who is regarded by many as a philosopher-saint who balanced devout faith with openness to new ideas.... that rare figure: a bridge between East and West." - Times Literary Supplement"...brings both the man and his world brilliantly to life." - Steve Simon, Council on

Foreign Relations"...could only have been written by someone with a profound knowledge of the French and Arab worlds..." - Fredrick Starr, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies"...an important book on an important subject. I hope it will reach a wide audience. I will introduce it to my fellow scholars and students." - Seyyed Hossein Nasr, University Professor of Islamic Studies, George Washington University"Commander of the Faithful should be used as a guidebook for understanding current and future conflicts and interventions." - Col. John Bourgeois USMC (ret)

John W. Kiser is the author of four books including *The Monks of Tibhirine: Faith, Love, and Terror in Algeria* (St. Martins, 2002). He is a former international technology broker with a B.A. in European History from Columbia and an M.B.A. from the University of Chicago. His articles have been published in *Foreign Policy Magazine*, the *Washington Post*.

This is a very well researched biography of Emir Abd el-Kader, the first leader to resist French colonization of Algeria. In many ways, this is an important work in the polarized world we live in today and Kiser's awareness of this diplomatic aspect of his penmanship is evident throughout the book. Indeed this higher motivation, of bridging the current religious and civilizational divide, is at times a bit of a distraction in the engaging historic narrative that we find unfolding in the pages of this book. Abd el-Kader was raised in the tolerant religious tradition of Islamic Sufism, and his duties and obligations as a religious scholar and leader were paramount during his military campaigns and later on during his exile in France and ultimately in Damascus. A clear distinction is visible between Abd el-Kader's worldview and that of the stereotypical Islamic scholar of today. Kiser treats his subject with respect - respect that often borders on adulation, but the treatment of the French is also gentle. Despite being colonizers (some contemplating the Native American solution to Algeria), many of them are depicted as wanting to do the right thing. Definitely worth reading.

This traces the outward actions of this man but shies away from integrating his spiritual beliefs into his person; a move that does not help the reader fully understand the motivations for most of his actions. This could have been much more. Still waiting for a biography on this man that satisfies...

Kiser aptly summarizes the great philosopher-warrior's life. He offers readers a window onto the life of one of Islam's great luminaries and defenders, Emir Abdelkader, who famously fought the French with honour and restraint, and later saved thousands of Christians in Damascus from a Muslim mob.

A very interesting and inspiring book centered on a 19th century Muslim leader who became a hero to Christians, including Abraham Lincoln.

A moving story told in lucid prose. It's one weakness was in not capturing more of the Emir's spiritual life as a Sufi. A similar book, Embattled Saints tells the tale of an Afghan Sufi who fought the Soviets that richly describes the profound spiritual teaching and methods behind these remarkable men.

Arrived on time. Item was as described.

Although the book was sometimes difficult to read, particularly with Islamic terms used throughout, the story of Adb el-Kader was fascinating. I had never heard of him before, so I was surprised to read how well-known he was in the world in the 19th Century. Book is most interesting for people who enjoy reading about real historical characters.

An Islamic Martin Luther King, well researched and very well written. An important example for our time.

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