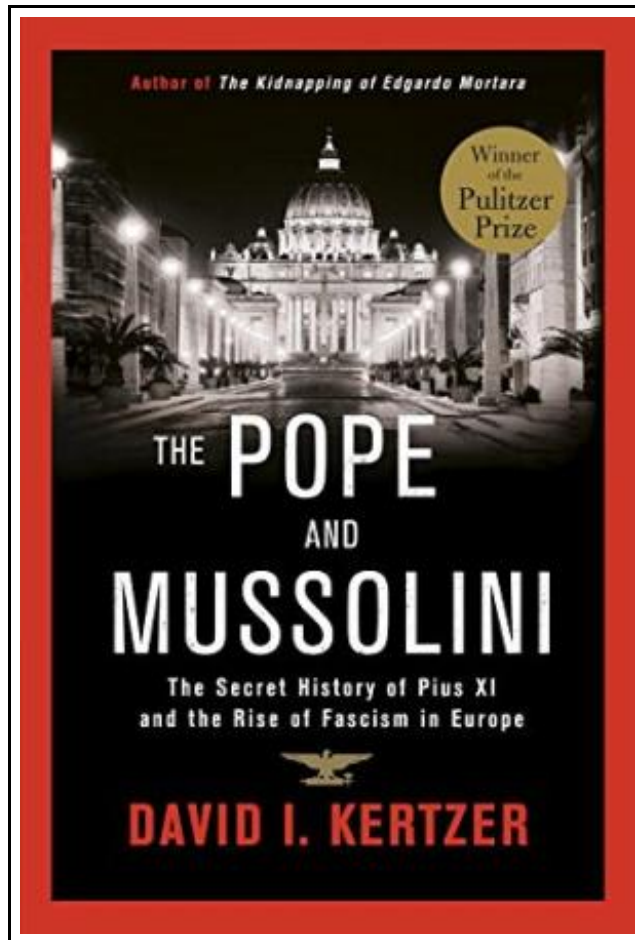


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Random House. 1 Cloth(s), 2014. hard. Book Condition: New. (Winner of the 2015 Pulitzer Prize for Biography or Autobiography) The author of the National Book Award finalist *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara* and the Mark Lynton History Prize finalist *The Popes Against the Jews*, David Kertzer traces the extent of Pope Pius XI's secret relations with Italian dictator Benito Mussolini in this gripping exploration. Both coming to power in 1922, Pius and Il Duce were vastly different in most respects. Yet they shared a distrust of democracy and a visceral hatred of Communism, and each relied on the other to consolidate his power and achieve his political goals. Kertzer's book is based on seven years of research in the Vatican and Fascist archives, including reports from Mussolini's spies inside the highest levels of the Church. "Two leaders came to power in 1922 in Rome, Achille Ratti was elevated to the papacy as Pius XI, and Benito Mussolini was appointed Italian prime minister. How relations between them developed until the pope's 1939 demise occupies this original history, which rests on Kertzer's thorough research of available Vatican archives and other sources. His main line of inquiry, the degree of support Pius XI accorded to Mussolini, guides Kertzer's narrative, which begins with Mussolini's opportunistic about-face from anticlerical socialist to Catholic-tolerating nationalist. Papal approval during the 1920s, when Mussolini's regime survived political crises, received its reward in 1929 with the Lateran Accords that reestablished the Vatican as an independent state. Although he finds points of conflict between Pius XI and Mussolini, Kertzer underscores affinities between the Catholic Church and the fascist state, which may arouse controversy. Was the church as acquiescent to Mussolini's persecutions of Jews as Kertzer portrays? In any event, he adduces evidence that Pius XI seems to have regretted his tacit alliance...

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