

In the Name of the Cross: Christianity and Anti-Semitic Propaganda in Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy

David Kertzer (Brown University)



Heated debate surrounds the question of the role Christianity and Christian churches played in the Nazi and Italian Fascist demonization of the Jews. This talk brings to light similarities and differences in the Nazi and Italian Fascist uses of Christianity in their efforts to turn their populations against the Jews through examination of two of their most influential popular anti-Semitic propaganda vehicles: *La difesa della razza* in Italy and *Der Stürmer* in Germany. Both would mix pseudo-scientific racial theories with arguments based on Christian religious authority, and both would present themselves as defenders of Christianity against the Jewish threat. Yet there were also differences, linked to the different relations each regime had with the Christian churches.

David Kertzer is the Paul Dupee University Professor of Social Science and Professor of Anthropology and Italian Studies at Brown University, where he served as provost from 2006 to 2011. His book, *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara*, published in eighteen languages, was a finalist for the National Book Award for Nonfiction in 1997. He was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in Biography in 2015 for his book *The Pope and Mussolini*, which also won the American Historical Association prize for best book in Italian history. Eleven foreign editions have been published. He is past president of the Social Science History Association and the Society for the Anthropology of Europe, and in 2005 was elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His most recent book, *The Pope Who Would be King*, on the Roman revolution of 1848, was published in 2018.

WEDNESDAY
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4:00 pm

The Magnes Collection of
Jewish Art & Life
2121 Allston Way

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