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Abstracts

FEDERICO MAZZEI, De Gasperi e l’Azione Cattolica dal fascismo alla democrazia. A proposito di una famosa lettera del 1944

The essay builds on the historiographical debate concerning a renowned document, such as the private letter of 1944 in which Alcide De Gasperi, leader of Christian Democracy, accused severely the Italian Catholic Action of being compromised with the fallen Fascist regime. Through a philological approach, it is able to rectify the recipient of De Gasperi’s letter, until now identified in his colleague ex-popular Stefano Jacini, by recognizing the real one in the prominent personality of Giuseppe Dalla Torre, director of Vatican journal «L’Osservatore Romano».

Dalla Torre was in fact himself the author of the historical book published in 1944, I cattolici e la vita pubblica italiana (1866-1920), which inspired the posthumous criticism of De Gasperi about Catholic Action under Fascism. Because of this new destination, the judgments sent by De Gasperi lose a bit their historical reliability insofar sincerely dispassionate confession, but they appear more conditioned by both political and ecclesiastical contingency. Analysing other documents of that time, the article shows how De Gasperi was above all concerned with a confessional and undemocratic turn of post-Fascist Catholic Action. But just Dalla Torre engaged in the lay political design of De Gasperi and assured the Holy See’s consent to one Catholic party. At the same time, Christian Democracy gathered support also by the intellectual groups bound with Msgr. Giovanni Battista Montini, which therefore oriented to democracy the new Catholic Action.

Keywords:

Alcide De Gasperi

Catholic Action

Christian Democracy