

Dario Fo, The Accidental Death of an Anarchist

1997 Nobel Laureate in Literature

Accidental Death of an Anarchist

was a reaction to the arrest of anarchist railway man Giuseppe Pinelli.

On December 12, 1969 a bomb went off in the Agricultural Bank in Milan
killing 17 people and wounding 100.

Immediately after the bombing fascists of the Italian Social Movement (MSI)
distributed leaflets denouncing the 'red terror'
and police in Milan went into action,
sweeping up a number of socialist, communist and anarchist activists.

One of these was Pinelli,
well known as a pacifist opposed to individual acts of violence.

After four days of interrogation in police headquarters
Pinelli 'fell' out of a fourth floor and died.

Police claimed that the death was an 'accident'.

These events sent a shock wave throughout Italy. There were demonstrations, articles in the
press, inquiries, etc.

In 1971, the policemen in charge of the investigation,
Calabresi, was charged with manslaughter.

Calabresi, in turn, launched a lawsuit against Lotta Continua,
the newspaper that had exposed many of the inconsistencies
in the police version of events.

These came to an end in May on 1972 when Calabresi was assassinated in front
of his house by 'unknown assailants.'

Ten years later in Catanzaro,

three fascists were convicted of the Milan bombings.
One of them, Giannettini turned out to be a paid informer for the Italian police.

Dario Fo, working in Milan with the Capannone of Via Colletta,
wrote the play in 1970 and it toured Italy playing to
audiences totaling more than a million.

It caused a sensation itself, creating a storm of controversy in the press,
bomb threats to the theatres, etc.

It has subsequently been translated into a number of languages and has been
produced throughout Europe and in the United States.

The play, while dealing with weighty political issues,
is nevertheless an extremely funny one rooted in Italian
traditions of farce and of commedia del'arte.

Its probing of issues of fascism, totalitarianism and the threats of a
police state transcend the particulars of the events
which inspired it.

Fo has penetrating insights into the nature of power in contemporary society and in this play
he exposes some of its contradictions.

Key dates in Fo's career:

1970-71 La Comune produces a play about the Italian and Palestinian
resistance.

Following the terrorist attack on the Banca
Nazionale dell'Agricoltura in Milan, Dario writes
and produces "Accidental Death of an Anarchist", about
the strage di Stato [a massacre thought to be
organized by organs of the state].

1973-74 The theatre collective is subjected to various acts
of repression by the police as well as to efforts at

censorship.

A group of fascists kidnap, tortures and rapes Franca Rame. Through this beastly act, they seek to punish Franca and Dario for their political activism, in particular Franca's work in the prisons since 1970. Outcries of indignation and support throughout Italy.

1977-78 In November opens at a production of "Female parts", a piece mixing the grotesque, comic and dramatic to illustrate the situation of women today. Alone on the stage is Franca Rame, who for the first time puts her name besides Fo's on the author by-line. The performance is staged more than 3000 times.

1979 Fo writes "La tragedia di Aldo Moro", on the kidnapping and assassination of the Italian Christian Democratic Party leader at the hands of the Red Brigades. The play, which has never been performed, is built on Sophocles' Philoctetes.

questions

what do you make of the prosthetic limbs?

57/ is the bomb real or a copy? what difference does it make?

67/ why mention watergate?

71/ maniac calls police 'children of hitler.' RAF also called same.

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