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 Giuseppi 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, inquires, 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 inconstancies
        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 dell'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
A group of fascists kidnap, torture and rape 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.
21G.061 Advanced Topics: Plotting Terror in European Culture
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