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Navigating the Storm of 1960s and 1970s: Italy's Political Landscape, Economic Stagnation, and the Rise of Labour Insurgency

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In this paper, we take a look back at the complex political and economic turmoil that transpired in Italy during the 1960s and 1970s, which is vividly depicted in Dario Fo's iconic play, The Accidental Death of an Anarchist. Set in times characterised by political instability, economic stagnation and labour unrest, Fo uses biting satire to expose deep-seated corruption and abuse of power within Italian institutions especially targeting the police force and judiciary. The play critiques the state's complicity in perpetuating systemic injustice, emphasising its oppressive impact on marginalised groups including workers women and students. Through a sharp political commentary, the play reflects the socioeconomic challenges facing them, pointing out that failure by states to address citizen's concerns is what makes power dynamics sustain inequality. By dissecting these themes, this paper underscores Fo's call for reform, advocating for transformative societal change that would challenge institutionalized corruption, bringing about genuine justice for all oppressed people in Italy.

Keywords: *political landscape, economic stagnation, labour insurgency.*

INTRODUCTION

'The Accidental Death of an Anarchist' by Dario Fo was a satirical play concerning Italian 60s and 70s politics with the fundamental idea of immense immorality, and misuse of authority as well as the conflict between the government and left-wing factions.¹ In this period, Italy underwent major social and political upheavals. The period was characterized by the emergence of different movements on the left such as anarchists, communists, and socialists who opposed the ruling regime and sought to change its power balance.² The performance is inspired by true events: an anarchist died under mysterious circumstances, having 'fallen' from a police station window in Milan back in 1969.³ But Dario Fo's story here is fictitious and aims to criticise the Italian State's close relationship with its law enforcement bodies, characterising it as working hand in glove. In *The Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, Fo uses humour and absurdity as tools for revealing the malpractices and inadequacy of those in authority. The maniac, a protagonist in the play, acts as various other people like a judge, psychiatrist, or police inspector, thereby making it clear how nonsensical the whole matter surrounding the death of the anarchist was. Through the Maniac's antics and truth manipulation, Fo highlights how power abuse occurs and what people in power can do to maintain control, also ensuring their evil deeds remain unknown. Several of these actions are seen in the tyrannical abuse carried out over the years by most political leaders without any respect for justice or responsibility, not only in Italy but also in other countries. In summary, Dario Fo's play offers powerful insight into Italy's social and political realities. Through his satirical approach, Fo shines a light on systemic issues and injustices, challenging audiences to confront these problems and consider paths to reform and societal change. His theatrical narratives serve as a bitter reflection of Italy's thundering landscape, providing insights into the root causes of political instability, economic stagnation, and labour unrest. By exposing these fundamental flaws, Fo encourages his audience to look for potential areas for progress and transformation.

¹ *A Study Guide for Dario Fo's "Accidental Death of an Anarchist"* (Cengage Learning Gale 2017)

² Sam Lowry, 'Worker and student struggles in Italy, 1962-1973' (*libcom.org*, 12 March 2008)

<<https://libcom.org/article/worker-and-student-struggles-italy-1962-1973-sam-lowry>> accessed 18 April 2024

³ *A Study Guide for Dario Fo's "Accidental Death of an Anarchist"* (n 1)

ABOUT THE SETTING OF THE PLAY

The play 'The Accidental Death of an Anarchist' unfolds within one room of a police station in Milan, Italy. It is there that the happenings in the comedy and tragedy of the play are based. The Maniac, the protagonist of the play, is often seen meeting other actors at the main police station desk. To be more realistic, a scene of filing cabinets, chairs, and other office furniture may also be included in the set. In the course of the play, the settings only include the police station. Nevertheless, the environment changes constantly because characters keep moving out and into it, while the Maniac stages diverse wiles aimed at revealing the underlying truth about the anarchist's death as a result of the bomb blast that destroyed his house. The play's satirical elements are highlighted because the setting is simple and this leaves more focus on the characters and the dialogue. The audience is, therefore, made to become part of the absurd world at the police station, where anything may be something else and the tricks of the Maniac are almost misleading.⁴ The setting of the play depicts the brilliance of Fo in showing the realistic characteristics of the play so that the message of the play and the ongoing political, economic, and social situations of the country can be clearly understood by the people of Italy as well as by the whole world.

THE POLITICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PLAY

'The Accidental Death of an Anarchist' by Dario Fo is a play that explores the political situation during the 1960s and 1970s in Italy. It focuses on themes like social unrest, political instability, and the emergence of leftist groups. The play highlights the widespread corruption in Italian institutions, characterising mainly the police force and the judiciary. In it, the authorities are willing to do anything to maintain power while at the same time hiding their wrongdoings. Fo's portrayal reveals how these bodies, which are supposed to uphold justice and maintain public order, are instead implicated in unethical practices and power abuses. The police are shown to be involved in cover-ups, falsifying evidence, and engaging in brutality to suppress dissent and protect their interests. Similarly, the judiciary is depicted as complicit, failing to hold the police accountable and often participating in the manipulation of legal processes to maintain the status

⁴ *Ibid*

quo. Through sharp satire and absurdity, Fo exposes the depth of these corrupt practices, illustrating how they contribute to the broader political and social instability of the era. The play critiques the erosion of public trust in these essential institutions, highlighting the urgent need for transparency, accountability, and reform. When he portrays his other characters, it becomes known that those in power can do anything including telling lies in public and diverting justice just to have their way. The conflict between the government and leftist movements is demonstrated in the tensions between the government and its leftist opponents (like anarchists, communists, or socialists), as reflected in the play. The tensions between the government and leftist movements in 'The Accidental Death of an Anarchist' refer to the intense and often violent conflicts that arose as these groups sought to challenge and dismantle the established power structures. These tensions were marked by frequent protests and demonstrations organised by anarchists, communists, and socialists, who opposed the existing state policies and demanded systemic change. The government's response to these movements was characterised by heavy-handed tactics, including police brutality, mass arrests, and extensive surveillance. These measures were aimed at suppressing dissent and maintaining control, often leading to violent clashes between protesters and law enforcement. Additionally, the judiciary played a role in perpetuating these tensions by being complicit in the manipulation of legal processes to protect the interests of those in power. This created an environment where the leftist groups felt increasingly marginalised and oppressed, further escalating the conflict. The play vividly portrays these dynamics, highlighting the deep-seated corruption and the state's efforts to silence opposition, thereby providing a critical commentary on the political landscape of Italy during the 1960s and 1970s. These groups opposed existing structures seeking to overthrow state power. The drama represents government officials as antagonistic towards such groups as anarchists, communists, and socialists by suppressing revolt through the use of force or threats.⁵ In general, 'The Accidental Death of an Anarchist' is simply a severely severed commentary about Italy's political establishment between the 1960s and 1970s, disclosing the corruption, misuse of authority, and suppression that marked that era. The play brings out the difficulties encountered by whoever went against certain legal principles and how those in authority could do everything possible to steer clear of falling from their hands. This play is a clear portrayal of

⁵ *Ibid*

corruption and abuse of power. The era of the 1960s and 1970s in Italy was marked by significant corruption, misuse of authority, and suppression, vividly portrayed in Dario Fo's play 'The Accidental Death of an Anarchist'. Corruption during this period permeated various state institutions, especially the police force and judiciary, where bribery, nepotism, and manipulation of legal processes were rampant. These corrupt practices allowed those in power to cover up their wrongdoings and avoid accountability, often through collusion between law enforcement agencies and political leaders. The misuse of authority was evident in the way officials overstepped their legal boundaries to maintain control, frequently employing excessive force to suppress protests and silence dissent. Police brutality, illegal surveillance, and the fabrication of charges against political activists were common tactics used to stifle opposition and maintain the status quo. The play highlights these abuses of power through its depiction of the police's behaviour, particularly in their handling of the anarchist's death, which is used to illustrate the broader systemic issues within the state. The suppression of dissent was another defining feature of this era, with the government resorting to heavy-handed tactics to quash any form of resistance. This included not only physical violence but also psychological intimidation and legal persecution, creating an atmosphere of fear and repression. Through its satirical lens, 'The Accidental Death of an Anarchist' exposes these harsh realities, critiquing the deep-seated corruption, misuse of authority, and oppressive practices that defined Italy's political landscape during this tumultuous period.⁶

'The Accidental Death of an Anarchist' brings to light the significant challenges faced by individuals who dared to oppose the corrupt and unjust practices of those in power. The play underscores the immense difficulties encountered by anyone who went against established legal principles or sought to expose the truth about state misconduct. In the narrative, those in authority, particularly the police and judicial officials, are depicted as going to great lengths to protect their interests and maintain their grip on power.⁷

The protagonist, the Maniac, exposes the absurdity and deceit within the system by impersonating various officials and manipulating the truth to reveal the extent of the corruption.

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ Dario Fo, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (Oxford Dictionary of Plays 1970)

Through his antics, the play illustrates how authorities would engage in elaborate cover-ups, fabricate evidence, and manipulate legal proceedings to evade accountability. The death of the anarchist, which is central to the plot, serves as a metaphor for the consequences faced by those who challenge the status quo. The mysterious circumstances of his death, purportedly a fall from a police station window, symbolise the lengths to which those in power would go to silence dissent and avoid scrutiny.⁸

Fo's play demonstrates that individuals who sought justice or transparency were met with significant obstacles, including threats, intimidation, and violence. The authorities used their positions to distort the truth, ensuring that their malpractices remained hidden from the public eye. This created an environment where challenging the system was not only difficult but also dangerous.

By showcasing these struggles, the play highlights the systemic nature of corruption and the lengths to which those in authority would go to protect their interests. It underscores the need for transparency, accountability, and reform within the system, urging the audience to recognise and address these issues in their societies. The difficulties faced by those who opposed the corrupt practices of the time are a central theme of the play, reflecting the broader societal challenges of confronting and overcoming entrenched power structures.

ECONOMIC SITUATION OF ITALY DURING THESE PERIODS

'By the end of the 1960s, Italian industry had diversified broadly, even impressively in some respects, excelling in information technology and the manufacture of automobiles, chemicals, domestic appliances, and, remarkably, aerospace components. The commodities traditionally bearing the label 'Made in Italy' (particularly textiles, footwear, food, and home furnishings) were also flourishing, supported by a web of small and medium-sized enterprises. Growth slowed during the 1970s and 1980s, starting with the first energy crisis in 1973. The first energy crisis in 1973, often referred to as the 1973 oil crisis, had profound effects on Italy, as it did on many countries worldwide. This crisis began in October 1973 when the members of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) proclaimed an oil embargo in

⁸ *Ibid*

response to the United States' support for Israel during the Yom Kippur War. The embargo led to severe oil shortages and skyrocketing oil prices globally, causing widespread economic disruption. In the context of Italy, the 1973 oil crisis exacerbated existing economic challenges and had far-reaching consequences for the nation's economy and society. Before the crisis, Italy had experienced a period of robust industrial growth, but it was heavily reliant on imported oil to fuel its industries and transportation. The sudden increase in oil prices led to significant economic strain, marked by rising inflation, increased production costs, and a slowdown in industrial output. The energy crisis forced the Italian government to implement austerity measures and energy-saving policies. These included reducing public lighting, imposing driving restrictions, and encouraging energy conservation across industries and households. Despite these efforts, the crisis led to economic stagnation, characterised by reduced economic growth and increased unemployment. Many small and medium-sized enterprises, which formed the backbone of Italy's economy, struggled to cope with the rising costs and decreased consumer demand. The crisis also intensified social and political tensions within the country. Labour unions, already vocal about workers' rights and economic disparities, found new grounds for protest as the economic situation worsened. Strikes and demonstrations became more frequent, reflecting widespread dissatisfaction with the government's handling of the crisis and its impact on ordinary citizens. The economic hardship further fueled the growth of leftist movements, including anarchists, communists, and socialists, who called for radical changes to the political and economic system. In 'The Accidental Death of an Anarchist,' the backdrop of the energy crisis and the resulting economic stagnation adds depth to the portrayal of systemic corruption and misuse of authority. The play's depiction of the police and judiciary's corruption can be seen as a reflection of the broader societal disillusionment with institutions that failed to protect the interests of the common people during times of crisis. The energy crisis underscored the vulnerabilities and inefficiencies of the Italian political and economic systems, making the public more aware of the need for accountability and reform. Thus, the 1973 energy crisis not only disrupted Italy's economy but also played a significant role in shaping the social and political landscape of the time. It highlighted the fragility of the nation's economic foundations and contributed to the rising discontent that Dario Fo captures in his play. Through its satirical lens, 'The Accidental Death of an Anarchist' offers a critique of the systemic issues

laid bare by the crisis, urging the audience to confront the underlying causes of corruption and consider paths to meaningful change.

The system of *partecipazioni statali* fell to *clientele-type* political demands, which led to the construction of manufacturing plants in *fàr-flung*, inconvenient locations. Large-scale enterprises lost ground and a shift of GDP from industry to service enterprises.⁹ The system of '*partecipazioni statali*' refers to state-owned enterprises in Italy, which played a significant role in the country's economy, especially during the post-World War II era. These enterprises were initially established to foster economic development, manage essential industries, and ensure public control over critical sectors such as energy, transportation, and heavy industry. However, by the 1970s, the system of *partecipazioni statali* began to falter due to '*clientele-type* political demands'. This phrase refers to the practice of using state-owned enterprises to serve political interests rather than the public good. Political leaders and parties would often appoint loyal supporters or party members to key positions within these enterprises, regardless of their qualifications or ability to manage the businesses effectively. This practice is known as *clientelism*, where political favouritism and personal connections overshadow merit and efficiency. As a result, the management of state-owned enterprises became increasingly politicised. Decisions regarding investments, hiring, and operations were often driven by political considerations rather than sound economic principles. This led to inefficiencies, mismanagement, and corruption within these enterprises. Resources were diverted to satisfy political allies and maintain power rather than to improve the performance and competitiveness of the industries. The impact of *clientele-type* political demands on *partecipazioni statali* was significant. State-owned enterprises often became overstaffed with politically appointed personnel, leading to bloated administrative costs and reduced productivity. Investments were misallocated, and projects were undertaken not based on their economic viability but on their potential to garner political support. This mismanagement contributed to the overall decline in the performance of these enterprises and, by extension, the broader Italian economy. The 1973 oil crisis further exacerbated these problems. As energy costs soared and economic growth slowed, the inefficiencies and financial strains of the state-owned enterprises became more

⁹ Emanuele Felice and Giovanni Vecchi, 'Italy's Modern Economic Growth, 1861-2011' (2015) 16(2) *Enterprise & Society* <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26567911>> accessed 18 April 2024

pronounced. The combination of rising operational costs and poor management practices led to mounting debts and deficits within these enterprises. The government, struggling with its fiscal challenges, found it increasingly difficult to subsidise and support the failing state-owned sectors. In this context, the decline of *partecipazioni statali* serves as a critical backdrop for understanding the economic and political environment depicted in Dario Fo's 'The Accidental Death of an Anarchist.' The play's exploration of corruption, misuse of authority, and systemic inefficiencies resonates with the real-world issues plaguing Italy during this period. The dysfunction within state-owned enterprises mirrored the broader dysfunction within the political system, highlighting the interconnectedness of economic and political corruption. Fo's satirical portrayal of the authorities' manipulation and deceit reflects the broader societal disillusionment with institutions that had become vehicles for political patronage rather than public service. By exposing these systemic flaws, the play urges the audience to consider the need for transparency, accountability, and reform in both the political and economic spheres. This shows that the year 1960s was a period of economic growth but from the 1970s, there was economic stagnation, which eventually affected the livelihoods of people.

CONDITION OF WORKING WOMEN IN ITALY DURING THESE PERIODS

'In Italy, where there is high unemployment, job priority goes almost exclusively to men. Women are assumed to be married and so can always depend on their husbands to support them.' In 1970, Italian women made up 18.6 per cent of the total workforce. In 1972, only 18 per cent of all Italian women worked paid jobs. With the present economic crisis, the situation has worsened. The female workforce has been in steady decline for decades, except for the brief economic boom in the early 1960s, when women made up 27 per cent of the workforce. This exclusion has resulted not only from haphazard sexist favouritism but also is the outcome of official government policy dating from the fascist 1920s.¹⁰ The official government policy dating from the fascist 1920s refers to the approach and directives implemented by the fascist regime under Benito Mussolini, who came to power in Italy in 1922. Mussolini's government introduced a series of policies aimed at consolidating power, promoting nationalism, and reshaping Italian society according to fascist ideals. One of the key policies introduced during this period was

¹⁰ *Ibid*

corporatism, which sought to organise society into hierarchical groups or corporations representing different sectors of the economy. These corporations were meant to serve as intermediaries between the state and the people, consolidating economic and social control under the fascist regime. Corporatism aimed to suppress class conflict and unify the nation under a single, authoritarian leadership. Another significant policy was the promotion of autarky or economic self-sufficiency. Mussolini's government sought to reduce Italy's dependence on imports by encouraging domestic production and industrialisation. This policy was driven by the belief that economic self-sufficiency would enhance national security and reduce vulnerability to international economic pressures. Additionally, the fascist government implemented policies aimed at centralising political power and suppressing dissent. Political opposition was systematically marginalised through censorship, propaganda, and the establishment of a totalitarian state apparatus. The regime used violence and intimidation to maintain control, suppressing freedom of speech, assembly, and political organisation. Furthermore, Mussolini's government pursued expansionist policies aimed at restoring Italy's status as a major European power. This included aggressive military actions in Ethiopia and support for nationalist movements in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. These policies aimed to bolster Italy's influence and prestige on the world stage, aligning with fascist ideals of national greatness and imperial ambition. Overall, the official government policies of the fascist regime in Italy during the 1920s and subsequent years were characterised by authoritarianism, nationalism, corporatism, autarky, and expansionism. These policies profoundly shaped Italian society and politics during the fascist era, leaving a lasting impact on the country's political culture and socio-economic development.

This shows that the working conditions of women were degraded to a new level during the period of economic stagnation in the 1970s, and that was also because of government policies, which eventually showed that the government was not functioning properly.¹¹ During the economic stagnation of the 1970s in Italy, the working conditions of women deteriorated significantly, influenced by various government policies and broader socio-economic factors. Government policies played a crucial role in shaping the labour market dynamics and social

¹¹ *Ibid*

welfare environment during this period, often exacerbating existing inequalities and challenges faced by women in the workforce. Firstly, labour market policies implemented by the government could have directly contributed to the degradation of working conditions for women. These policies may have included discriminatory practices in hiring and promotion, as well as inadequate protections against workplace harassment and exploitation. Women, who traditionally faced barriers to equal opportunities in employment, may have encountered even greater challenges during economic downturns when job opportunities became scarcer and competition intensified. Moreover, social welfare policies designed to support vulnerable groups during times of economic hardship may have been insufficient or unevenly applied. Women, who often bear a disproportionate burden of caregiving responsibilities within families, may have been particularly affected by cuts or limitations in social welfare benefits. This could have exacerbated economic pressures on women, forcing them into precarious work arrangements with low pay and minimal job security. In addition to specific labour and social welfare policies, the broader economic strategies pursued by the government could have indirectly impacted women's working conditions. Economic downturns typically lead to austerity measures and budget cuts, which may have reduced funding for programs aimed at improving gender equality in the workplace or supporting women entrepreneurs. As a result, women faced heightened vulnerabilities in the labour market, with limited access to decent work and opportunities for career advancement. Overall, the combination of inadequate labour market protections, insufficient social welfare support, and broader economic challenges underscored the government's failure to effectively address gender disparities in the workplace. These policies not only perpetuated inequalities but also highlighted systemic flaws in governance and administration, revealing a pressing need for comprehensive reforms to ensure equitable opportunities and improved working conditions for women in Italy.

CONDITION OF WORKERS AND STUDENTS IN ITALY DURING THESE PERIODS

The citizens of Italy experienced a period of disorganisation in the 1960s and 1970s owing to the disagreement on the pledges that the government of the left was supposed to fulfil. These demonstrations were usually triggered by low pay and unfavourable surroundings concerning working. At the same time, displaying against the obsolete university system, students'

movements led to occupations and demands for overhaul, while the happenings of May 1968 in France inspired Italian workers towards a more aggressive approach than before, thereby going against the conventional trade union heads, revolutionary cells began to call up among factory workers who demanded immediate action and complete independence from trade unionism.¹² But, by the time autumn of 1969 had set in, the unions regained influence on the workers' strikes by making them pursue the normal route. Nevertheless, even as fierce battles continued into the start of the seventies, the labour movement underscored the difficulty of staying independent from established orders as well as making significant economic progress. The dissatisfaction among the students and workers, frequent strikes, and revolution were the signs of disapproval towards the government by the people. The government used its power to oppress these strikes and revolutions to remain in power and these dissatisfactions were the path that led to the growth of left in the country during that time. During the 1960s and 1970s, Italian students were at the forefront of a wave of social and political activism that swept across the country, marking a period of significant cultural and ideological transformation. Inspired by global movements like the civil rights struggles in the United States and the student protests in France, Italian students became increasingly vocal in their criticisms of societal norms and the established political order. Central to their dissatisfaction was the perceived inadequacy and rigidity of the Italian education system. Many students criticised traditional teaching methods as outdated and authoritarian, advocating instead for curriculum reforms that would address contemporary issues and foster critical thinking. They sought greater autonomy within universities, demanding representation in decision-making processes and challenging the hierarchical structures that governed academic life. Beyond educational reforms, Italian students also aligned themselves with broader social justice movements, particularly those advocating for workers' rights. They joined forces with labour unions in protesting against poor working conditions, low wages, and the perceived exploitation of labour.¹³ This solidarity between students and workers underscored their shared discontent with socio-economic inequalities and their desire for a more equitable society. The student movement in Italy was not merely a quest for educational and labour reforms; it was also a critique of political repression and

¹² Sam (n 2)

¹³ *Ibid*

authoritarianism. As their activism intensified, students faced increasing opposition from the government, which responded with measures aimed at quelling dissent. Police crackdowns, arrests of student leaders, and censorship of student publications were common tactics used to suppress protests and maintain control. Despite these challenges, the student movement persisted, driven by a deep-seated belief in social justice and a determination to challenge entrenched power structures. Their protests and demonstrations became symbols of resistance against an establishment they viewed as corrupt and unresponsive to the needs of ordinary citizens. The dissatisfaction among students during this period was not only a reflection of their immediate grievances but also a catalyst for broader societal change, influencing public discourse and shaping the political landscape for years to come. In essence, student dissatisfaction in Italy during the 1960s and 1970s represented a critical moment of societal awakening and activism. It highlighted the interconnected struggles for educational reform, social justice, and political freedom, demonstrating the power of youth-led movements to challenge authority and demand a more inclusive and equitable future.¹⁴

POLITICAL SITUATION DURING THESE PERIODS

Following the left-wing terrorist group Red Brigades' kidnapping of former Italian Prime Minister Aldo Moro in March 1978, conspiracy theories have become common. Their main focus is often on the notion that the Red Brigades are not just a domestic organisation but are being steered by a foreign hand as well, instead of being the cause of things like political discontent or social unrest, these theories were saying the blame was on outside forces.¹⁵ Hof claims that the Moro abduction case shows the interconnectedness between terrorism, conspiracy theories, and anti-terrorism policies in late 1970s Italy.¹⁶ It provides a perspective for understanding assorted political and social dynamics characterising Italian life during this period, as well as on how different groups used conspiracies to influence people's minds, thus pursuing their goals. This

¹⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁵ Tobias Hof, 'The Moro Affair - Left-Wing Terrorism and Conspiracy in Italy in the Late 1970s' (2013) 38(1) Historical Social Research / Historische Sozialforschung <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/23644499>> accessed 18 April 2024

¹⁶ *Ibid*

shows the sign of an encounter between the left group and the government, and to counter the left group, the government was abusing its power to a whole different level.

CONCLUSION

The unrest that characterised this era resulted from political circumstances, labour unrest, economic stagnation, etc., in Italy from the 1960s through to the 1970s. This paper seeks to examine the issues that led to widespread dissatisfaction among different groups in society, such as workers, students, and political activists. During this period, Italy was in a difficult situation, having to deal with different issues, such as unemployment problems and political division, among others. The labour movement continued to intensify as it was made to realise that its leaders were oppressed besides earning nothing in what was an unequal society. It led to serious confrontations between the workers and other symbols of power like government officials or owners of industries. In the play 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist,' Dario Fo gives a touching expression of the social turmoil of the time. By using comedy and black humour, Fo discusses the corruption, unfairness, and power exploitation as seen in an Italian community. This comedy's hero, a Madman (the Maniac), symbolises the supremacy of suppression forces by likening him to workers and residents who were fighting against their situation during those times. The accidental death of the anarchist in Fo's play is a sign of what can happen when someone has too much power. It represents the tragic results of trying to fight against lies and dishonesty in a society that has been destroyed by crime and injustice. I come to the end of this paper and say that the political circumstances, labour insurgency, and poverty faced by the people of Italy during the 1960s and 1970s shed some light on how Dario Fo's 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist' mirrors the political and social realities of those times. In his play, Fo highlights the inequities and social injustices that were responsible for the various upheavals in Italian society, hence presenting a strong argument against authoritarianism and power.