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Today in Italy

Special service by AGI on behalf of the Italian Prime Minister's office

AMBROGINO D'ORO: FALLACI AWARD BOOED

(AGI) - Milan, Italy, Dec 7 - Oriana Fallaci's award of the "Ambrogino D'Oro" award today was accompanied by a mixture of cheering and booing. Fallaci did not pick up the award on health grounds and was stood in for by the chief editor at the "Giornale della Toscana" Riccardo Mazzoni. There was a minor degree of jeering when journalist Magdi Allam took his award. "I wish to thank the mayor and those who supported me in winning the award" Fallaci recently said; "as for the vile diatribes which arose as a result of my nomination I wish not to comment. Comments such as those are "neo-Macarthian" and are an attempt to gag free speech". Dozens of people outside the Theatre including actors Moni Ovadia, Ottavia Piccolo and Bebo Storti stirred things up outside prior to the award ceremony: "the city of Toscanini, Paolo Grassi, Giovanni Raboni and Franco Fortini - they said - can't become the city of Oriana Fallaci". Dario Fo, who is running for mayor in Milan quoted S. Ambrose: "you have to respect difference, but Fallaci is just plain racist". "Beccaria" jail chaplain Gino Rigoldi agrees: "it's a crying shame, a blemish on politics, an attempt to stir things up through hate and runs totally counter to the beliefs of many citizens". Members of the Lega Nord Matteo Salvini on the other sported words of praise: "we are all for freedom of speech, we must reward attempts to provide alternatives to sugar sweet portrayals of reality". "We - says Milan mayor Albertini - wish to reward her civil qualities; we may judge her differently but her work as a writer demands respect". (AGI) - 071717 DIC 05

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