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## Arundhati Roy is irresponsible and lame

Wednesday, 01 April 2009

Last Updated Wednesday, 01 April 2009

courtesy: india.ca Arundhati Roy has written an especially arrogant and irrelevant editorial in the Times of India. She makes sweeping statements condemning the government and Sri Lanka and prescribes the world to return like Jesus and somehow fix everything. The government's not going to turn around and be like, wow, we're genocidal maniacs, thanks for pointing that out. The 'world' is not going to a) exist in any real sense or b) come and occupy Sri Lanka. All she's doing is intellectual masturbation. It might make her feel better but it helps no one. All the people I see actually doing something on the ground speak moderately and do small things when and where they can. And they work with the government, and they don't needlessly antagonize people. People are working on sending basic medical supplies to the Vavuniya hospital this week for example. There is hopefully a truck going up on Friday. I bought some surgical gloves. I'm not waiting for the world police, no matter how loud Arundhati Roy blows her own horn. I have spent years railing against the government without actually leaving my comfort zone. Life was much simpler then. Since I've tried to become more active I've discovered that things no longer seem so black and white. When the point is to just rant it's very easy to make sweeping pronouncements. However, on the ground you discover that you need to compromise. To actually help people you need to go through government agents and government hospitals and calling them genocidal and tyrannical is both counterproductive and untrue. For example, I think Arundhati Roy's article in the Times of India (reproduced on TransCurrents) is both ill-informed and counter-productive. From the little information that is filtering through it looks as though the Sri Lankan government is using the propaganda of the 'war on terror' as a fig leaf to dismantle any semblance of democracy in the country, and commit unspeakable crimes against the Tamil people. Working on the principle that every Tamil is a terrorist unless he or she can prove otherwise, civilian areas, hospitals and shelters are being bombed and turned into a war zone. Reliable estimates put the number of civilians trapped at over 200,000. The Sri Lankan Army is advancing, armed with tanks and aircraft. Meanwhile, there are official reports that several 'welfare villages' have been established to house displaced Tamils in Vavuniya and Mannar districts. According to a report in The Daily Telegraph (Feb 14, 2009), these villages 'will be compulsory holding centres for all civilians fleeing the fighting'. Is this a euphemism for concentration camps? The former foreign minister of Sri Lanka, Mangala Samaraveera, told The Daily Telegraph: 'A few months ago the government started registering all Tamils in Colombo on the grounds that they could be a security threat, but this could be exploited for other purposes like the Nazis in the 1930s. They're basically going to label the whole civilian Tamil population as potential terrorists.' What we are witnessing, or should we say, what is happening in Sri Lanka and is being so effectively hidden from public scrutiny, is a brazen, openly racist war. The impunity with which the Sri Lankan government is being able to commit these crimes actually unveils the deeply ingrained racist prejudice, which is precisely what led to the marginalization and alienation of the Tamils of Sri Lanka in the first place. That racism has a long history, of social ostracisation, economic blockades, pogroms and torture. Several of us including myself, who should have spoken out much earlier, have not done so, simply because of a lack of information about the war. So while the killing continues, while tens of thousands of people are being barricaded into concentration camps, while more than 200,000 face starvation, and a genocide waits to happen, there is dead silence from this great country. It's a colossal humanitarian tragedy. The world must step in. Now. Before it's too late." What I find deeply irresponsible about her article is that she both admits that she's ill-informed and yet sees fit to basically accuse the whole Sinhala south of prosecuting this as a racist war. Well, WTF. I don't agree with the war and I didn't support it but I understand that some response is necessary when there are a constant bomb attacks in Colombo, when the Foreign Minister is killed, when people are banned from voting, etc. I actually agree with her on many broad points, but her tone is so sweeping and broad that it's frankly insulting. There are certainly racist elements in the government and everywhere, but on the whole this is actually a war against the LTTE. Her sources, however, are thrice removed articles from foreign papers (even though we have available media here she could read if she looked a bit more) and quotes from Mangala Samaraweera who, whatever side he's on now, is still a cunning liar who helped get Mahinda elected in the first place. Any yet, based on a cursory reading of British papers she sees fit to judge a whole complex, decades long war into a simple genocide/asshole dichotomy and recommend that the 'world' step in to... do what? These magical realists who invoke the world or world intervention as a solution don't realize that this is about as pointless as asking Jesus to step in. The 'world' doesn't exist in such a concrete political sense such that it can step into this island and fix everything. It is only the arrogance of irrelevance that would lead Ms. Roy to judge a conflict so simply and pronounce such a simplistic solution. Seriously, what positive action does she think is going to come out of calling the Sri Lankan government racist and genocidal and asking the world to come in and do what? Overthrow our government? Save the LTTE? What? Is the LTTE mentioned even once? Reading the editorial it seems like the Army is just bombing random Tamil villages. Where does she get off? I supported peace before and I support the people suffering in the North right now, but I think Arundhati Roy's editorial is just irresponsible and lame. Wow, you read something in the Telegraph and felt bad. Get a blog. In reality, the only people who can actually pause this conflict are the LTTE by laying down arms, accepting amnesty and letting those people go. The UN, US and UK actually called for this realistic position saying - 'We suggested the idea of some kind of humanitarian pause to allow that to happen and to allow the civilian population to leave,' he said. 'This is an extremely worrying situation, and therefore our first appeal is to the LTTE to let the civilians out in a safe and orderly fashion.' If you want to actually effect change you have to compromise. If you're not doing anything I guess you can divide some other country into good and evil, call in the world cavalry and call it a day. But make no mistake, it does nothing for anyone in Sri Lanka and it does nothing for the people suffering in the North. If anything it

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makes things harder. If you want to help, people are trying to send some medical supplies up now, to the government hospital in Vavuniya. Arundhati Roy and the world police aren't actually helping anyone. [indi.ca] Courtesy: Transcurrent.com