A gospel for the forsaken

Arunadhi Roy’s anguished imagination and moral commitment to the oppressed classes cut through her essays even though some of them are alarmist and rhetorical.

Stanly Johny

Arunadhi Roy stepped into the writers’ hall of fame after her debut novel, The God of Small Things, won the Booker Prize in 1997. She took two decades to publish her second novel, The Ministry of Utmost Happiness. But Roy has always been busy writing. Over the past 25 years, she has written dozens of non-fiction essays on topics ranging from India’s nuclear explosion to “American imperialism”.

My Sedulous Heart compiles most of these essays, offering a ringside view of the rebellious political con-science of one of India’s most celebrated writers.

Rebellious stance

Roy’s rebellion is not new. In one of the early essays, she calls herself “an independent, mobile republic”. And in the most recent article in the volume, she writes that “my name was still on the A list of anti-nationals” “What connects all the articles is this moral rage. Her inflamed prose, gritty dis-trust of power and moral commitment to the oppressed make these writings stand out as a gospel for the forsaken.

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