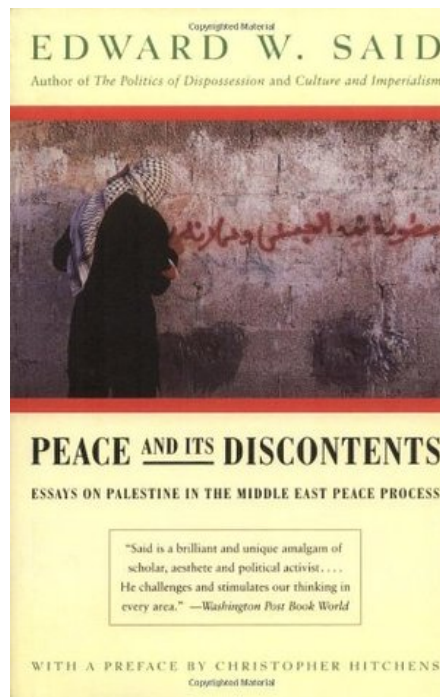




# Peace and Its Discontents: Essays on Palestine in the Middle East Peace Process

*Edward W. Said , Christopher Hitchens (Preface)*

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**Peace and Its Discontents: Essays on Palestine in the Middle East Peace Process** Edward W. Said , Christopher Hitchens (Preface)

Ever since Yasir Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin shook hands on the White House lawn, Israel and the Palestinian people have been engaged in what commentators persist in calling "the peace process." Yet Israel remains racked by violence and continuing land seizures, and Palestinians are more demoralized than ever before. Now in this probing and impassioned book, one of our foremost Palestinian-American intellectuals explains why the much-vaunted process has yet to produce peace--and is unlikely to as presently constituted. Whether Edward Said is addressing the fatal flaws in the PLO's bargain, denouncing fundamentalists on both sides of the religious divide, or calling our attention to the distortions in official coverage of the Arab world, he offers insights beyond the conventional wisdom and a sympathy that extends to bot Israelis and Palestinians. He does so with an incisiveness, clarity, and fairness that make Peace and Its Discontents essential reading for anyone who cares about the future of the Middle East.

## Peace and Its Discontents: Essays on Palestine in the Middle East Peace Process Details

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## **Marwan Shalaby says**

In the times of hyperbolic political rhetoric, unqualified "othering" and information distortion, it's important to remember Edward Said, and revive his work and all the values he stood for. No words would describe his eloquence in contextualizing concepts related to dispossession, freedom and self-determination. This collection of essays demonstrates the harsh political reality feeding on pauperisation and marginalisation, creating even more fertile grounds for hate, violence and radicalisation. It's always fruitful to read Said's books or watch his lectures whenever you feel that values like liberty, social and economic equality are suppressed by being branded as mere chimeras, or just "politically correct" tools. Said is a true intellectual; unapologetically critical of any form of unjust and unjustified authority, framing concepts such as "acceptance", "tolerance" and true untainted "liberty" in their most audacious forms.

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## **nanto says**

Yang ini ada di perpustakaan dan benar adanya. Sudah di-ceg! Pake "ge" bukan "ka" lagi! :D

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## **Ahmad Abdul Rahim says**

Buku Peace and Its Discontents ini adalah koleksi 2 artikel pengkritik sastra, Edwards Said pasca upacara penandatanganan Rundingan Oslo di White House tahun 1993.

Dari awal Edward Said telah mengingatkan bahwa rundingan ini adalah rundingan palsu yang hanya akan meneruskan rasa ketidakpuasan rakyat Palestina terhadap Israel yang akan seterusnya meningkatkan konfrontasi.

Melalui buku ini aku dapat tahu banyak kelompongan rejim Yasser Arafat rupanya. Mereka tidak demokratis, korup, dan mengamalkan dictatorship. Oslo Accord 1993 dilakukan hasil daripada beberapa siri rundingan rahsia bersama Israel. Rakyat tidak tahu menahu apa yang PLO telah tawarkan dan apa yg Israel tawarkan. Wira 2 intifada yg terdahulu tidak di rujuk pandangan mereka. Wakil 2 rakyat palestina tidak tahu menahu apa yg dibincangkan. Dalam masa yg sama Israel mempunyai segala kelebihan berbanding Palestin; mereka mendapat bekalan senjata daripada US juga bantuan kewangan 5 billion setahun, mereka berkelebihan dari segi ilmu: Israel mempunyai department 2 yg khusus mengajar tentang bangsa Arab di universiti 2 mereka. Rundingan Oslo 1993 juga menyaksikan Israel diwakili dengan pakar 2 perunding yg profesional. Palestin pula diwakili oleh Yasser Arafat yang tidak berkeahlian dalam teknikal perundingan, tidak mahir bahasa inggeris (bahasa yg digunakan dalam teks Rundingan Oslo), dan kekurangan dari segala segi.

Hasilnya adalah perjanjian yg sangat absurd; tanah, air udara Palestin dipersetujui adalah untuk dipegang oleh Israel (dimana klausa tersebut merupakan satu tacit agreement yg memperakui kewujudan Israel sebagai sebuah negara).

PLO cuma mendapat 'gula 2' dalam bentuk pengiktirafan Israel terhadap PLO sebagai entiti yg Israel akan

berhubung bersama (tetapi Israel tidak mengiktiraf kewujudan Palestin), PLO ada kuasa bagi pendidikan, kesihatan, mewujudkan badan polis sendiri dsb.

Kebanyakan bahagian daripada buku ini merupakan kritikan Edward Said yg dihadapkan kepada barisan kepimpinan Palestin waktu itu yg diketuai Yaser arafat. Menurut Said, Yaser arafat jelas tidak kompeten dan gagal. Yaser arafat ibarat telah melupakan dosa2 Israel pada Palestin lebih 40 tahun dulu sejak Nakbah bermula. Hal ini paling jelas melalui Klausu2 dlm Rundingan oslo tersebut yg membayangkan seolah2 peristiwa nakbah tidak pernah berlaku. Kegagalan Yaser arafat ini hadir dalam bentuk: Nasib rakyat palestine yg terdampar menjadi pelarian hasil kolonialisasi israel tidak diperjuangkan, Wang pampasan di atas jumlah kerugian dan kematian yg ditanggung Palestin hasil intifada tidak ditimbulkan (israel mendapat 40billion USD pampasan dari Jerman atas holocaust), perjuangan Hak rakyat palestine utk mendapat self-determination dan perakuan sebagai sebuah negara merdeka tidak dibangkitkan.

Ini sangat berbeza dengan apa yg Nelson Mandela lakukan sewaktu menentang rejim apartheid di South Africa, tegas Said. Nelson Mandela sewaktu berunding dengan kerajaan Afrika selatan waktu itu, tidak pernah berpaling daripada matlamat2 utama perjuangan rakyat Kulit hitam yg antaranya: pemerakuan bahawa rakyat kulit hitam diiktiraf sebagai sama rata, pemberian semula hak untuk mentadbir sendiri (self-rule) kepada rakyat afrika, dan menghentikan apartheid. Permintaan Nelson Mandela itu ditolak, dan beliau dipenjarakan sebanyak lebih 20 tahun.

Lain ceritanya di Palestin, walaupun perjuangan Palestin dan perjuangan rakyat afrika Selatan hampir sama tempohnya (40 tahun++). Menjelang tahun 1990-an apartheid mula diruntuhkan dan suara2 rakyat Afrika Selatan mula didengari. Tetapi di Palestin keadaan kian runcing berikutan rundingan oslo. Yaser arafat yang kini mempunyai kumpulan polisnya yang tersendiri, telah bertindak menjadi henchman Israel dengan mengenakan tindakan terhadap mana2 pihak yg cuba menjejaskan apa yg disepakati di Oslo ie; sesiapa2 yg cuba menyerang Israel. Arafat mula sedar yg beliau terperangkap.

Walaupun ia bukanlah sangat sebuah buku dan lebih berupa koleksi artikel, tetapi buku ini sangat bagus bagi mana2 pihak yg ingin tahu apa yg berlaku sewaktu rundingan Oslo dan bagaimana ia mendatangkan kesan terhadap hubungan israel-palestine.

Said turut menempelak intelektual2 Palestin yg terlalu simplistik di dalam menganalisis hubungan US-Israel. Kata Said, mereka tidak dapat menanggapi lapisan2 masyarakat dan institusi2 yg pelbagai yg wujud di US yg menyumbang kepada polisi mesra Israel yg diamalkan US.

Hal ini penting untuk difahami, kerana dengan mengkaji perkara2 inilah baharu perjuangan Palestin dapat dirangka dengan efektif. Kalau tidak sampai ke sudah rakyat2 Palestin perlu bermandi darah lantas melupakan overarching objective di dalam perjuangan nasionalis mereka.

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## Andi says

I'm pretty sure that I could read Edward Said's grocery list and be enthralled. He's just brilliant.

Reading this definitely helped me get a different perspective of the Palestinian Peace Process in '93 and '94. I also feel like I understand the underlying issues a lot better now, which is really cool. Edward Said is

missed.

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**Pedro says**

Edward Said tiene una visión contundente sobre el conflicto de Israel y Palestina en donde crítica a ambos bandos por igual, y quizás con mucho más rigor a los propios líderes de la ANP / OLP, Fatah y Hamas. Es una de las fuentes menos viciadas que se pueden conseguir. Lamentablemente el libro narra sucesos que nos parecen lejanos porque datan de mediados de los 90, y en lo que respecta a esta zona del mundo, hace falta casi una actualización diaria para que la información sea lo más veraz y pertinente posible.

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**Alex says**

This is an excellent book. It was written around 20 years ago so it's a little outdated but almost everything Said discussed is still relevant today, especially his commentary on American politics and Clinton's presidency (which applies wonderfully to Obama currently).

It's a series of essays he wrote right after the signing of Oslo so they can get slightly repetitive but each essay still brings a unique look at the situation.

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**Amr Mohamed says**

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## Simon Wood says

### A COLD AND UNGENEROUS "PEACE"

The peace process that emerged from negotiations between Yasir Arafat and the Israelis in Oslo in 1993, and later signed in Washington, received an astonishing amount of media hype at the time and for many years after. Not a single cliché was left on the shelf, and no panegyric was deemed too extravagant to those who praised the Oslo accords to the skies. One exception was the late Edward Said who was highly critical from the outset. But then he, unlike the myriads of bumptious reporters and cliché-mongering commentators who ritually slobbered over it, had actually read the Oslo accords. It was clear to Said, and other Palestinians, that the accords were one sided, and essentially "a cold and ungenerous peace" dictated in Israeli interests. A year later as the Palestinians economy, territorial integrity and security had visibly deteriorated Said had this to say:

"In what world do Yasir Arafat and Abu Mazen live when all last year [1993-94] they kept proclaiming their trust and confidence in Israel, an Israel that has dispossessed our people, and continues to this minute to confiscate land, to increase settlements, kill and incarcerate thousands of Palestinians?"

In this collection of articles written throughout the period of 1993-95, Edward Said comments on the "peace" process as it developed, and the implications for the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. His views were criticised by those who supported Oslo as destructively negative, but it is hard not to consider his comments, such as the following, as essentially correct: "There is no vision in the Israeli leadership, no sense that in the long run problems solved at Palestinian expense now will simply come back to plague both peoples in the future."

In addition to the central focus on the "peace" process Said finds space for a number of short biographical pieces, such as the one he writes about the remarkable Sara Roy (see "Failing Peace: Gaza and the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict"), an American Jew whose family had suffered losses during the Nazi Holocaust, though this did not stop her from having the breadth of humanity to write eloquently on the form of apartheid and de-development that the Israelis subjected Gaza too. A lesser known figure is also remembered, Hanna Mikhail, a Palestinian Christian of Quaker extraction, who left behind a successful academic career in the United States to play a principled and exemplary role in the Palestinian Liberation Movement, and died in 1976. One of the highlights is Said's essay "Decolonising the Mind" in which he underlines the limitations of those rejectionists and sycophants of Israel and the West amongst the Arabs, and calls on the Arab world to engage in a comprehensive, nuanced and critical study of Israel and the West.

Apparent throughout is the growing contempt that Said feels for how Arafat and his cronies conducted themselves. His thesis is that Arafat, fresh from his disastrous Gulf War diplomacy and short on funds from the Gulf States, undermined the Palestinian negotiators from the occupied territories by conducting secret talks with the Israelis in Oslo, essentially to save his own position. The accord Arafat and Abu Mazen (now his successor) negotiated was essentially a declaration of surrender as far as Palestinian interests were concerned. Everything for Israel, and at best vague statements for the Palestinians on crucial issues such as illegal settlements, refugees, economic development, institutions, and territory - the only concrete "reward"



was Jericho and the un-settled parts of the Gaza strip that Yitzak "break their bones" Rabin (known as "Soldier of Peace" in respectable circles) had once hoped would sink into the sea. Functionally, vis-à-vis the Israelis Arafat was acting in the manner of a collaborator, and so it went on until the utterly paltry Israeli offer in the final settlement negotiations when he had no choice but to finally face reality, and refused to sign the final surrender.

If you want to avoid mouthing clichés about the 1990's peace process, and wish to have some crucial background for an understanding of current Israeli-Palestinian relations then this book is enormously important. Edward Said's critical intelligence, principled outlook and, in the best sense of the word, his critical voice are always worth listening to, and this book is no exception. It is a great crime that the Palestinian and Israeli leaderships did not take on board his calls for a just peace of equals.

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### **Lindsey says**

Made me want to read more about the follow-up to the Oslo Accords and more about the second intifada.

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