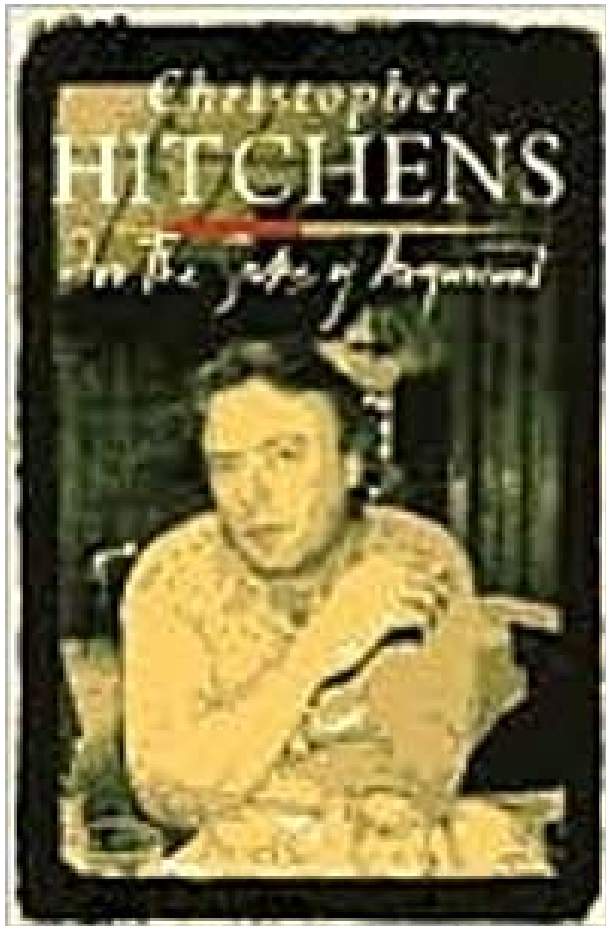


For the Sake of Argument: Essays and Minority Reports



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The global turmoil of the last few years has severely tested every analyst and commentator. Few have written with such insight as Christopher Hitchens about the large events — or with such discernment and wit about the small tell-tale signs of a disordered culture. *For the Sake of Argument* ranges from the political squalor of Washington, as a beleaguered Bush administration seeks desperately to stave off disaster and Clinton prepares for power; to the twilight of Stalinism in Prague; from the Jewish quarter of Damascus in the aftermath of the Gulf War to the embattled barrios of Central America and the imperishable resistance of Sarajevo, as a difficult peace is negotiated with ruth foes. Hitchens's unsparing account of Western realpolitik in the end shows it to rest on delusion as well as deception. The reader will find in these pages outstanding essays on political assassination in America as well as a scathing review of the evisceration of politics by pollsters and spin-doctors. Hitchens's knowledge of the tortuous history of revolutions in the twentieth century helps him explain both the New York intelligentsia's flirtation with Trotskyism and the frailty of Communist power structures in Eastern Europe. Hitchens's pointed reassessments of Graham Greene, P. G. Wodehouse and C. L. R. James, or his riotous celebration of drinking and smoking, display an engaging enthusiasm and an acerbic wit. Equally entertaining is his unsparing rogues' gallery, which gives us unforgettable portraits of the

lugubrious “Dr.” Kissinger, the comprehensively reactionary “Mother” Teresa, the preposterous Paul Johnson and the predictable P. J. O’Rourke.