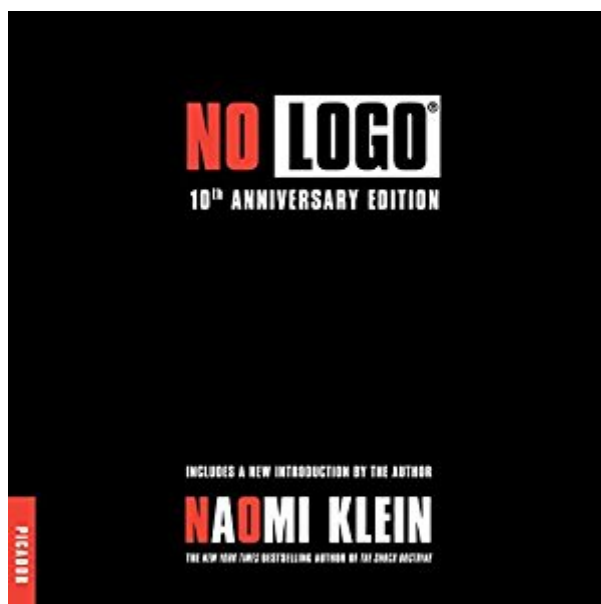


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No Logo: Taking Aim At The Brand Bullies



Synopsis

With a new Afterword to the 2002 edition. No Logo employs journalistic savvy and personal testament to detail the insidious practices and far-reaching effects of corporate marketing-and the powerful potential of a growing activist sect that will surely alter the course of the 21st century. First published before the World Trade Organization protests in Seattle, this is an infuriating, inspiring, and altogether pioneering work of cultural criticism that investigates money, marketing, and the anti-corporate movement. As global corporations compete for the hearts and wallets of consumers who not only buy their products but willingly advertise them from head to toe-witness today's schoolbooks, superstores, sporting arenas, and brand-name synergy-a new generation has begun to battle consumerism with its own best weapons. In this provocative, well-written study, a front-line report on that battle, we learn how the Nike swoosh has changed from an athletic status-symbol to a metaphor for sweatshop labor, how teenaged McDonald's workers are risking their jobs to join the Teamsters, and how "culture jammers" utilize spray paint, computer-hacking acumen, and anti-propagandist wordplay to undercut the slogans and meanings of billboard ads (as in "Joe Chemo" for "Joe Camel"). No Logo will challenge and enlighten students of sociology, economics, popular culture, international affairs, and marketing."This book is not another account of the power of the select group of corporate Goliaths that have gathered to form our de facto global government. Rather, it is an attempt to analyze and document the forces opposing corporate rule, and to lay out the particular set of cultural and economic conditions that made the emergence of that opposition inevitable." —Naomi Klein, from her Introduction

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 18 hoursÂ andÂ 35 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Macmillan Audio

Audible.com Release Date: December 13, 2011

Language: English

ASIN: B006LPQVGK

Best Sellers Rank: #47 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government >

Ideologies & Doctrines > Anarchism #55 inÂ Books > Audible Audiobooks > Arts & Entertainment

> Art #109 inÂ Books > Audible Audiobooks > Business & Investing > Economics

Customer Reviews

While I worried that this was a simple ideological diatribe, I was very happily surprised at the intelligence and substance of Klein's book. It is a tough, well-reasoned manifesto for the anti-consumerism left of "Gen X." If you are wondering what was driving many of those protesters at the WTO and other summit meetings - most notoriously Seattle in late 1999 - then this book is the best place I know. It is part cultural critique, part economics and social policy, and partly a call to arms. Reading it has helped me to make sense of so much that I thought was simple, nihilistic anarchism. I was humbled to learn that there is far far more behind the movement than I had granted it. In a nutshell, Klein argues that the "superbrands" - the huge corporations such as Disney and Nike - are progressively taking over virtually all "public spaces," including school curricula, neighborhoods, and all-encompassing infotainment malls like Virgin Megastores. They are doing this in an attempt to enter our minds as consumers in the most intimate ways, which Klein and others find unbearably intrusive. Moreover, she argues, as they subcontract overseas, the superbrands are leaving first-world workers behind while they exploit those in the developing world under horrible conditions. It all adds up, she asserts, into a kind of emerging global worker solidarity that is developing new means (via internet exposes, protest campaigns, etc.) to push the superbrands to adopt more just policies and practices. What was so amazing and useful for me, as a business writer looking at the same issues, is that Klein so often hones in on the underside of what I think are good and effective business practices: the development of brand values, globalisation of the production/value chain to lower prices, and the like.

I found this book to be very interesting, and disturbing. Klein is certainly a Leftist, and generally as a conservative I would dispute much of her world-view but with the first half of her book she is on to something. I believe that the second half is less successful, and I do not share her idealization of graffiti artists and anti-global activists, but overall her book is a provocative and important one. Read and beware. I would like to respond to an earlier reviewer's comments, which many of my friends have directed me to when I told them of the book. Tristan from Australia finds fault with a graph in her book (not indexed for inflation) and then sets to beaking her over the head with it. I think he misses much of the point of her book - even if her graph is off. There is no question based on anecdotal evidence alone that advertising and the pervasiveness of "branded" space has increased. Look at modern sports stadiums, say the NFL - they're all named after corporations. The athletes at "FedEx Field" are all wearing brands that the team has negotiated (and been paid large sums to wear) - and they can be fined if they aren't wearing a "Starter brand" cap when they sit on the

bench, etc. They then sit down and drink a Gatorade, while they watch the Coca-cola sponsored half-time show featuring Michael Jackson, Britney Spears or whoever the company believes they can best get to flog their product. The highlights from the first half will be then shown on the X-brand half-time show, and then recreated using graphics from EA Sports John Madden game. You could avoid all this and go to a movie, but first you'll have to sit through advertisements before the movie - and not just for upcoming movies anymore.

..SHORT STORY: This is a very, very interesting book regardless of what the "ending" or the "higher purport" may be and irrespective of the pseudo-intellectual nitpicking by a number of other reviewers. So get it, read it and enjoy it. Even if it doesn't ruffle your fancies, it brims with real factual evidence about the dark side of big business so at the very least you'll leave with some very interesting information off a single, compact compilation. THE LONG, WINDING RAMBLE: The basic premise of the book is to highlight how advertising and general business practices have changed in the last twenty years. Essentially, companies decided that they were no longer in the business of selling products, because products are messy, duplicable, or even improvable. But if you are selling an idea, an experience, a set of associations, it is much harder for another company to compete with you. Think of Tommy Hilfiger for instance -- clothes manufactured in China and India for throw-away costs, but their designs are frantically devoured globally at horrendous price tags. This is why branding is big, and sometimes clandestine, business. The book is divided into four sections: 'No Space,' 'No Choice,' 'No Jobs' and 'No Logo.' 'No Space' is about the cluttering of our public spaces with ads; 'No Choice' describes different tactics used by big-name brands to drive independent retailers out of business; 'No Jobs' takes aim at sweatshop labour but with the corporations' "Brand, not products!" mentality in mind (it also includes details of Klein's trip to an Export Processing Zone just south of Manila); finally, 'No Logo' documents the global movement against branding and many of the organizations and people behind the revolt. POSITIVES: 1.

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