



## Introduction of Naomi Klein by Joris Luyendijk

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For the second time in less than a month a progressive public intellectual of the Left fills a huge venue in Amsterdam faster than most pop stars do.

A few weeks ago Thomas Piketty, author of *Capital in the 21st Century* could have sold out the Paradiso Pop Temple three times over. Today Naomi Klein fills Tuschinski theater to the brim. Literally hundreds of people had to be turned away and together with thousands of others they are watching the live stream.

As I was preparing for this talk I tried to think of a more famous progressive public intellectual in the world right now. If we discard Barack Obama for a moment, as he seems to have moved on to bigger things, there is nobody who succeeds in reaching so many people across so many countries with such thorough and complex books as Ms. Klein.

If you don't already know her work you should have given your ticket to somebody who does. Obviously. But for the sake of the person sitting next to you let me talk a little about how Naomi Klein crashed on the scene in 2000 with *No Logo*, a searing analysis of globalization. Contrary to those progressives who preferred to bury themselves in identity politics, Klein puts issues of power and equality center stage in *No Logo*. She continued along that path with *The Shock Doctrine* in 2007. This was a frontal attack on the global neo-liberal order, showing how capitalism of the neo-liberal variety progresses by exploiting the panic and chaos that follow political and natural disasters. The book came out just as the financial system

imploded with the demise of Lehman Brothers bank in September 2008. And exactly as Ms. Klein predicted, it was primarily the financial industry and the one percent it serves that benefited from the financial disasters, first of Lehman and then of the euro.

Now Naomi Klein has written *This Changes Everything*, a book she herself describes as "her most painful yet."

It is. As Kevin Spacey remarks in the movie *American Beauty*: 'Never underestimate the power of denial.' And it is denial that Klein is confronting head-on. Denial not only by climate change 'skeptics', but also by what she calls Big Green.

This is a hard book to read, simply because with every page you come to share her view on why climate change changes everything. Either because we implement the wide range of fundamental changes necessary to avert a disaster. Or because we don't and disaster strikes.

But there is hope, she says.

So please join me in welcoming Naomi Klein to the stage.