

# Nomade

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*L'insurrection est le plus  
sacré des devoirs*



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# "We're only doing our job"

*Workshop Blacklisting of companies, by the Dutch Anarchist Anti-deportation Group (AAGU) and Werkgroep Stop Deportaties (WSD).*

**B**lacklisting usually starts with naming companies and/or persons involved in work that should not be done. People should know what this company or person does; because companies and people aren't keen on negative publicity, and tend to keep quiet about aspects of their work that can be viewed as controversial. Just 'naming' companies or persons can put some pressure on them, but in order to be more effective active 'shaming' is needed: using a variety of means to tag the company or person as 'wrong' one way or the other and to eventually stop them doing this work. We would say that blacklisting as we use it differs from simply focusing on a company that is obviously wrong. In other words, for example arms producing companies or vivisection laboratories are usually targeted as such, while the companies that for example are involved in building a new jail are targeted just for their involvement in this project and urged to stop doing this, without the aim of completely shutting down these companies as a whole. In the end the focus is on the project, as part of the migrant policy, and not on the companies involved.

## Some recent examples

Internationally the most well known 'naming and shaming'-campaigns are probably those of the animal rights movement. The Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC) campaign focuses on forcing all kind of companies associated with the animal-testing laboratory Huntingdon Life Sciences to give up all links with HLS. Very confrontational tactics are used in this campaign, which in some ways prove to be successful. The peace movement has for some years been blacklisting financial institutions, like banks and pension funds, for investing in arms trade and production, for example for investing in cluster munitions- and land mines-producing companies. For migration-related activism there are some recent websites or pdf-files with listings of companies, institutions and sometimes also persons involved in work connected to locking up and deporting migrants.

## Current blacklists

The past few years both in the Netherlands and in Belgium similar blacklists of companies involved in detention centers have been published. Involvement in the new center at Rotterdam Airport (NL) and Schiphol Airport, involvement in the new center at Steenokkerzeel (BE). Currently, there are three large blacklists to be found in the Dutch - Flemish spoken region: Websites: <http://www.dc-16.nl/> (detention centers Rotterdam Airport and Schiphol) <http://blackliststeenokkerzeel.blogspot.com/> (detention center Steenokkerzeel, and more detention centres and prisons). PDF file: De Schandpaal (The Pillory) that has not only companies involved in all detention centers, but also addresses of immigration, police, etc. None of these lists contain more personal information than names of directors and such, so no addresses.

## Difference between Belgian and Dutch blacklists.

One thing taken further in Belgium is the blacklisting of for example the Red Cross. The Dutch seem hesitant to blacklist seemingly friendly organizations, NGO's. Nevertheless, Amnesty International serves as an apologist for locking up migrants in the Netherlands. They never protest against the deportation machine as a principle. They say people need to be locked up in order to deport them. Amnesty only protests against the most obvious inhumanities in the system. And Amnesty is also known to deliver work to prisons. They have female prisoners telex for them, (and so do more NGO's by the way). Another difference is the publication of personal information. In the Netherlands this has been done twice. As far as we know, in Belgium: not. Yet. The Dutch authorities responded very quickly to the publication of personal information.

In May 2008 a website called Stop The Deportation Machine published personal information of for example employees working for immigration, wardens of detention centers, politicians. One warden saw the names of his children also published, along with information on the boxing school where his son went. The website was taken off-line within a day after it's existence became known to the authorities. Earlier this year, a PDF file

with names and addresses of individual prison riot police LBB was published (along with information on their use of violence). This was also 'noticed and taken down' in a short time. It took a bit longer, because the PDF went spreading all over the internet. But by threatening websites that published the LBB papers with large non-compliance penalties the LBB papers were mostly removed from the web after a few weeks. The PDF method therefore was more effective than the website a few years back. Both times the removal was taken care of by the privacy watchdog. No criminal law was involved, there were no criminal charges, nobody got arrested. (though, in the first case, the intention of the website was suspected of being incitement to violence and arson, because of illustrations that were used).

## Why blacklisting ?

It might seem that it is not very logical or ideological correct to forget companies instead of aiming for the state institutions that make the policy decisions. The choice to focus on targeting companies has a very 'down to earth' side. Companies are more vulnerable and therefore tend to be the weakest link in the deportation machine, compared to the state and its institutions. For a company the benefits of the job have to outnumber the costs (money directly, but also image and so on). They are not compelled to take up certain work, nor have ideological reasons to do so. This doesn't mean it's easy to force a company out of something, because no company wants to give in to pressure. The point that a company gives up does exist, as examples show, but it's not very common a campaign succeeds in this way.

## Decentralized actions

Companies with a lot of branches are perfect for a campaign of decentralized actions. In the Netherlands we have an ongoing campaign against the hiring of detention prison guards by temp agency Randstad. Randstad has branches in a lot of smaller and bigger cities. And we are planning a new campaign against building company BAM, the head contractor for the new judicial complex Schiphol, which will house amongst others a detention- and a expulsion center. BAM has a lot of

offices all over the Netherlands, and has offices in a lot of other countries as well. Some companies, not all, are easier targets. They have less security than state institutions, or are better located for actions.

### Deterrence

While it is not easy to force a company out of a project it has already taken up, the main point of 'naming and shaming' is deterrence. By letting this company what it can expect when it does this kind of work, by raising their costs, they will hopefully think twice before starting to work on such a project again. With the same reasoning you can also create a domino effect' by deterring other companies from doing this kind of work. Attacking the companies and persons that profit from the miserable conditions they help put others in, is also an attack on the deportation industry' or 'prison industrial complex' itself, and thereby a attack on the capitalist ideology behind it. We have to realize that if every company and every person refuses to do this work, it won't get done at all. "We're only doing our job" is no excuse, never.

### Effects

In the Netherlands, in the years 2009 and 2010 the campaign 'Stop DC16' was held. This was a very simple campaign against the companies involved in the construction of the new detention center at Rotterdam Airport. We published a list of these companies on our website. And then we did some actions: picketing these companies, doing some noise demos in front of their buildings and doing some theatrical actions, like a die-in, delivering protest-illegal and bringing blood money. There was no direct damage to buildings. But the campaign inspired others to do 'harder' actions. Other than direct costs by damage, there were a lot of indirect costs, as we found out by a report from the research institute COT: "There were costs made in preparation before and after actions. Costs like: safety measures, instructing and training of personnel. Those costs are substantial. As an indication, one company told the researchers that it estimated the costs were about 100.000 euro." For two years 'picket lining'! From the same research institute about the same company: "because of the permanent threat our company cannot profile itself as it wants to be as an open and transparent operation partner. In the past, pictures

of staff members were on line, plus contact data. Not any more. We are very much advised against profiling ourselves on the internet. At the door, there has to be a strict entrance policy, to prevent uninvited guest from entering the building. Not very customer-friendly. Also, it is annoying that by googling the name of the company, one finds more hits about actions than hits about our beautiful realized projects."

### Fear of harder actions

By putting names etc of companies and names of staff members on our website, we found out that some action groups went for home visits, breaking windows actions and one or two arson actions. Although Stop Deportations (WSD) only did non violent actions, at companies the fear rose that those harder actions could happen to them any time. Spread of fear through deterrence is unmeasurable, of course no company wants to admit it refused to do or didn't apply for work because of fear.

### Reaction to actions (trying to keep it all quiet)

Detention center Rotterdam is only the first of the 'more to come' prisons that will be built via pps (ppp) or even totally private in The Netherlands. The second is the new judicial complex (detention and expulsion center) at Schiphol, as a replacement for the old one, where eleven people died in a fire. Learned from our campaign, the government plus the companies try to hide all information about this new project. Quote Cobouw (daily of the building industry): "The building of pps prisons takes place in total isolation, Afraid for the threat of 'the demolition of extra walls and fences. For JC Schiphol, it is not even made public to who and when the project is assigned. Also, the knowledge exchange between ministries has stopped, because of increased threats of extremists (groups). How deep bows Justice for the pressure of threats and takes to her heels to try to protect architects and builders? It is established that the client goes extremely far. All websites from governments to related market parties are erased as far as DC Rotterdam and JC Schiphol are concerned. During inter department consultation, it is made known there will be no more information about pps-prisons whatsoever. Actions of activists are given more priority than the exchange of knowledge and experience about dbfmo

projects." Although we try like hell, we still haven't found out who is in the building consortium, for instance (JCSchiphol). Except big builder BAM.

### Consequences: possible prosecution, and intelligence strategy

Judicial consequences differ per country. Makers of blacklist may be confronted with criminal charges of incitement. Internet publications may be noticed and taken down (because of invasion of privacy). In the Netherlands, AAGU and WSD were targeted by the Dutch Intelligence agency AIVD in the report "Het vuur van verzet" (the fire of resistance). We were accused of being responsible for harder actions also. This caused a media stir and may very well have been the beginning of more repression, as happened to animal rights activist before.

### Morals versus Effect

Do we want to take the risk to become responsible if a prison guard dies in a fire at home, after we published the address? Or his children, his cat, his dog, his goldfish? Do we want to have the moral right to pay-back, to revenge, to punishment? Aren't we just as bad then? Or are we right to publish, because we may assume that our fellow activists are wise enough to make the right choice of action-method? Where as even the smallest companies, caterers, etc. are blacklisted, the Red Cross, etc. addresses of persons seem to be 'not done'. So, when does it go too far? Is publishing an address of a responsible politician go too far? A warden? These are both cases of obvious blood-on-their-hands persons involved. But an individual private guard working for G4S? A nurse working in a detention center? And, what can be the consequences? And what the advantages?

### Effectiveness vs. Risk

If even the smallest cog wheels are named and shamed and can therefore be under attack, blacklists will be more frightful to those who cooperate with the system. The fact is that smaller companies are more vulnerable to the pressure, and more likely to withdraw. Then again, how effective is it? Don't we all want to smash the windows of the director of Besix more, than the windows of the nurse? And what will the media write and the public say

about the name of the nurse in the blacklist. Or the name of only-the-small-caterer who delivers bread to a prison? Do we care? And.. don't prisoners have to eat? Don't prisoners have to be taken care of when they are sick? Yes, prisoners do need to eat. And they do have a right to health care... But in freedom! So: anyone who helps make the system work, is responsible, and should stop. But makers of blacklists have to be aware of the dangers and it is wise to make a choice and weigh importance and effectiveness and risk.

### Careful!

It is wise to, if you want to publish personal information, make sure that it cannot be traced back to you. As far as visiting a black list can be traced back to the visitor: if a link is published in the blacklist, think about clicking it before you do, because : what will you do with it later ? (tracing back to you possible) And last but not least, users of these lists, have to be made aware by it's makers that information can get outdated. Last thing we want, is painting the door of an innocent person bloody red... So make sure: YOU CHECK.

### How to get the information?

First off, before publishing, make sure you have all the information. Once you have published, information may be taken offline. All research is different, it is also a lot of puzzling. Make sure the information is accurate and up to date. On the Internet more and more is available, but also there is an increased secrecy. Use search engines, specified search engines (for example to search info about persons), news sites, government sites and so on. Try to find smart search terms and combinations, to avoid an overwhelming amount of useless information. Other sources can be libraries, government buildings, Freedom of information act, talking to people as yourself or pretending to be for example a student working on a project. And then of course there are of course the less legal methods, such as breaking in, and hacking, garbage diving for documents, observing and following people, even infiltration.

### How to spread a blacklist

Websites are the easiest way to keep up with changes in your information. Make sure it is always up to date. Downside:

website can easily be taken down. So personal info of responsible persons cannot be published. Be aware that websites are often registered in a person or organizations name. You don't want that ? Find a hosting abroad that is safe and anonymous and upload safely. You can put more risky (personal) information in a PDF file. It can also be taken off the internet, but it can so easily be spread further by e-mail, by file sharing, USB, CD, by taking turns on the web. It will never really go away. Problem is: how do you make sure that outdated information gets corrected in a file already spread? Well. You can't. So you have to make a next version, and a next, and a next. And spread it all over again, and again. Make note in every version that information may have changed. Put the date of the publication on top of the document, so people will know which is the most recent.

### Once again, be careful!

Be aware that any file may contain information on it's maker! So: if you use pictures, be aware of information about camera's, about scanners, that comes along. So copy and paste into new files. Know that the program and version you use may also be info that may end up in your file.—Scanned documents may contain fingerprints, so need to be worked on to remove those. PDF files are often derived from text documents that contain information on the computer being used, it's user, the program versions being used, etcetera. HTML pages may also contain program and computer information. Make sure all information that secretly comes along is removed ! All this is very technical shit, so make sure someone who knows how to do it, does the job! For both websites and PDF files goes: make sure, if needed, you upload safely. Leave no traces of IP addresses, leave no traces at internet cafes and libraries (camera's, fingerprints...). Use TOR or something like that. Make sure you have an expert on safe internet publishing to do the job.

### Old fashioned paper spreading..

Don't take your blacklist to a publishing company.. Copy machines leave traces about their brand and type. Copies can be traced back to the machine involved. Especially new machines. Older methods can be used, like silk-screening, stenciling. Make sure originals are destroyed and not lying around. Spread it to squats, no border camps, anarchist

bookshops and book fairs... Leaving a pile of non-fingerprinted copies... Again, as in PDF: Put the date of the publication on top of the document, so people will know which is the most recent.

### Actions

Blacklists are more effective, if action is also taken and brought to your company or home. The simple naming and shaming for some folks just isn't enough to make them realize they have to stop their involvement. We assume that activists who use these lists, use also their common sense and are responsible persons. The level of involvement of a company or person is measure for action to be taken. You may want to burn the car of the director of immigration, but not the car of the nurse in the detention center. Any action that does not cause physical pain or death, and does only damage to image, to offices, buildings, structures, material, means of transport etc. can be seen as sabotage in the broadest sense. Sabotage by damage to reputation is also not to be underestimated! So leafleting, noise demos, pickets, die-ins, bringing in the blood-money, and more such symbolic actions are more effective than you think. But there is more. We think that a variety of methods works best!—So banner droppings, occupations, blockades and more ways of standing in the way, ad busting, videos, disinformation, home visits, sabotage, hacking, arson, bomb attacks... It is up to you. Be safe. Don't get busted. Jail sucks. But most important: make as sure as possible that things don't go terribly wrong - you may want to make sure you don't wind up yourself being the person with blood on his or her hands, if only this is bad for public relations... We think you're wise enough to make that call.

### Stick together!

All actions combined can be effective, as long as nobody (feels the need to) dissociate(s) oneself from actions taken by others. Be supportive. Don't respond by naming and shaming other activists or their methods or by calling methods used by someone else 'too soft' or 'too hard'. You may not want to go further than a picket yourself, but remember that the picket is more effective if someone else, somewhere else, lit a match at the same company, and the other way around...