

## **Doctor Spock or Makarenko? A Communist upbringing in the Netherlands and Britain 1940-1970.**

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This paper will discuss the theory and practice of a Communist upbringing and draws upon 40 interviews with Dutch and English respondents who grew up in Communist working class families in the period 1940-1970. I will examine the considerable contrast between the Communist theory stressed by the Party and the actual practice within the Communist home. The party had a huge influence on the political aspects of Communist lives, but I argue it had little influence on certain very private aspects of their lives, like the upbringing of their children. Parents themselves and not the Party decided which elements of the Communist ideology they wanted to blend into the upbringing of their children. As opposed to the sociologist Jolande Withuis, who emphasizes how one sided and restricted a Communist upbringing was, in this paper I will argue it was very varied. Two different worlds came together within the Communist home; the Soviet culture and Communist ideology blended in with the British and Dutch culture.

In this paper I will use the works of two famous pediatricians to show how Soviet culture and ideology were mixed with the overall quite ordinary 'western' lives of the respondents. I will compare the ideas of Dr. Benjamin Spock, whose book 'The Common Sense Book of Baby and Childcare' published in 1946 became an integral part of Western culture and the ideas of Soviet Educator Anton Makarenko whose work 'A book for parents' published in 1954 had huge impact on the Soviet society. Both were translated in many languages. A large number of respondents remember that their parents had a one of Makarenko's books at home. So did these Communist parents who brought up their children in Western Democracies follow Makarenko's ideas, or were they more influenced by the Western ideas of Dr. Spock like many of their non-Communist contemporaries?