



**Faszystowska wizja rodziny**  
**Fascist model of family**

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**questions and answers**



## LECTURE QUESTIONS

1. What upbringing did the supporters of fascism receive?
2. What upbringing did the creators of fascism receive?
3. What was the attitude of fascism to women?
4. What was the ideal of masculinity in fascism?
5. What behaviour and values were totally foreign to fascism?



## **1. What upbringing did the supporters of fascism receive?**

The fascist mentality was formed in the Wilhelmine Period. At that time, the prominent model of upbringing was the so-called "Prussian severity". It was characterized by a cult featuring elements like order, cleanliness and the suppression of emotion. However, its core was corporal punishment - what today researchers call "black pedagogy". It was assumed, and expressed in numerous textbooks on upbringing, that children should be beaten in infancy to promote a sense of "punishment" in them. Apart from beating, it was recommended children were humiliated. For example, when they lied, they were humiliated constantly over a number of days. Another important feature of the proto-fascist upbringing was the presentation of parents as gods. Children were to receive their beatings and humiliation with gratitude and never question their parents' guiding motives. In fact, children brought up like this idealized their parents, and directed their own forbidden anger at their own children or indicated minorities. The psychoanalyst Alice Miller notes that it was not only the sanctioned violence that was toxic in this scheme but also the suppression of expressed anger. One of the textbooks she described recommended that a child who cried too much after a beating should be beaten again. This suppressed, forbidden rage and hatred, with the reinforced cult of those who inflicted pain, produced a personality ready to support fascist power and fully identify with it.



## **2. What upbringing did the creators of fascism receive?**

All fascist leaders were cruelly beaten and humiliated in childhood as prescribed by the "black pedagogy". Hitler's father went around the house in uniform and expected to be addressed as "master". He terrorized his much younger, intimidated wife as well as children, who he would constantly beat. Adolf Eichmann, was taught, of course by means of beating, that politeness accepted no compromise under any circumstances. So at Nuremberg, he sat impassively when hearing the charges of genocide, including the murder of children, read out to him only to blush in shame when he was ordered to stand as the court read the sentence. All the prominent figures of fascism were brought up in families characterized by the absolute power of the father over the mother. People brought up in this way literally felt at home in Hitler's dictatorship. There was, on the one hand, the absolute power of the leader in the example of the father and, on the other, there was the possibility of discharging the suppressed anger on Jews and other minorities with impunity.



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### **3. What was the attitude of fascism to women?**

In families that applied the "black pedagogy" like in fascism itself, women were to be completely subordinated to men. Their role was to keep the house clean and tidy, and were expected to be quiet and discrete. Spontaneity and eroticism were considered signs of sin and dirt. As Klaus Theweleit shows in his famous book "Men's Fantasies", fascism was hostile to all women's freedom and independence. They were to be the servants of tyrant husbands, who never objected to their mistreatment or that of their children.



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#### **4. What was the ideal of masculinity in fascism?**

Men were supposed to treat women's work with disgust. They were to be devoid of warmth, which was identified with weakness. Fascism had a cult of strength and war, based on male aggression, combined with absolute subordination to the leader. This is how officer cadets were trained in the Third Reich. From the age of 12, boys were completely deprived of privacy, subjected to exhausting drills and constant humiliation and punishment. Despite the significant separation between the male and female spheres, which, as we know, favored homosexuality, fascism was extremely hostile to non-heterosexual people, who were punished for their orientation by death in the gas chambers. This was because fascists feared any erotic freedom or moral liberalism. Another feature of fascist men was supposed to be physical vigor and resistance to pain. It was considered glorious to kill and torture others without flinching.





## **5. What was the ideal of masculinity in fascism?**

With its origins in extremely hierarchical families based on corporal punishment, fascism above all abhorred equality whether it be equality between men and women or those of different ethnic origin or sexual orientation. Another value completely alien to fascism was solidarity with and care for the weak. Hence the killing of the mentally disabled. Fascist perceived them as deprived of humanity, as were ethnic minorities, homosexuals or "loose women". Another value hated by fascism was the belief that people could live in a better way. They had themselves suffered as children and wanted this suffering to continue. The vision that different oppressed social groups could be happier and more free violated the core of the authoritarian personality structure. Fascism also cultivated war and despised peaceful coexistence as a standard of relations. It also rejected freedom of thought and action or liberalism as a worldview. Everyone was supposed to be the same, obedient to the authorities without questioning their actions.



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## **PROPOSED READING**

1. Alice Miller, *English Title Required*, przeł. B. Przybyłowska, wydawnictwo Media Rodzina, Poznań 1999.
2. Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies*
3. Theodor W. Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality*
4. Katarzyna Szumlewicz, *Osobowość autorytarna i jej wrogowie: Wilhelm Reich, Theodor W. Adorno, Alice Miller i Klaus Theweleit*, Studia z Teorii Wychowania, tom 10, 2019, nr 4/29
5. [www.cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-2b6d68d6-63c2-433a-a922-db8ada170aa4](http://www.cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-2b6d68d6-63c2-433a-a922-db8ada170aa4)

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