

What is the significance of marxism in Attila József's philosophical development?

The object of my presentation is one specific chapter of Attila József's oeuvre that can easily demonstrate the phenomena of crisis from multiple aspects. As it is known, Attila József got acquainted with several theories through his lifetime which not only marked his poetry, but his non-fiction. One of the most important of these was the marxist philosophy, that perhaps brought about the first great change in Attila József's worldview. The poet tried to attain the marxist philosophy's way of thinking in the years of the great depression hoping that he would be able to answer the questions of his era. However, later he felt necessary to approach the theory in a critical way and improve it with the help of psychoanalytic results (presumably on the basis of Wilhelm Reich's works). On the one hand, this process appropriately illustrates the effect of crisis on intellectual people's thinking. On the other hand – as far as I am concerned – Attila József's conceptions are not less actual in time of our recent crisis than they were back then.

As a poet and essay writer, Attila József had long been interested in social inequality and the fortune of great masses, but for a long time he had been interpreting it as a cultural struggle and wanted to solve it through the idea of nation. However, in his fragment called *[Tisztelt Szerkesztőség!...]*, he made an attempt to reconcile nationalist and socialist principles. Although the signs of marxist theory appeared early in his work, in the beginning he must have gained that knowledge only from secondary sources, such as pamphlets or propagatory booklets. It is obvious even in the case of his lecture called *Irodalom és szocializmus*, which was his first presentation declaring his needs to organize his thoughts about marxism. In the autumn of 1930 Attila József became member of the illegal communist party, that delegated him to give lectures regularly. However, these lectures showed a culture-centered apprehension of social conflicts, that was an earlier approach of his, a marxist upgrade of art philosophy standing on idealistic basics. His intention in *Irodalom és szocializmus* had been really worked out in a study called *Egyéniség és valóság*, 1932, which shocked many communists and led the party to break up with the poet. In this study not only he used marxist words, but also the topic showed some marxist orientation: instead of the previously dominant poetics he emphasized the production and the individual's role in it. Doing so, Attila József adopted a point of view, which anticipated a world revolution through Great Depression. However, in his latter study another effect was caught, that partially

supported marxism, partially questioned it: the psychoanalysis. Initially the poet was against psychologism, although he used some results of psychology earlier (e.g. Wilhelm Wundt's Introduction to Psychology). Psychoanalysis was not as significant to his way of thinking as marxism for a while. In many of his articles and reviews, marxism was the standard (e.g. *Mécs László költészete, Ahogy azt a nagy Móricz elképzeli, Kosztolányi Dezső*), and his philosophical writings were also effected (*A szocializmus bölcselete*), as well as his focus changed from topics of art to problems of artsocialism (*Munkanélküli írók táppénze, [A művek alkotóinak és kiadóinak...], A művészet kérdése és a proletárság*). He also kept his ambition to frame the problems of socialism into national aspects (*A nemzeti szocializmus*).

Nevertheless, with the forging of fascism and Hitler's rise to power, the idea of socialism turning into nationalism proved to have been an empty phrase, however, it became obvious that there was no reason to wait for a communist revolution. Even Attila József himself started to realize more and more that marxism is not enough to solve all the increasing and multiplying problems of the crisis. Of course, shutting him out of the communist party also contributed to his disappointment. On account of this, he started to use more the psychoanalytic concepts in his articles, notes and poems to complete marxist ideas (e.g. *Ázsia lelke*), moreover, he criticised the marxist ideas through psychonalatic concepts in his study called *Hegel-Marx-Freud* saying that the incomplete biological concept of human and the ignorance of the power of subconsciousness made the marxist ideology defective. However, he did not alienated from the theory of Marx; rather Attila József was trying to fix a humanist theory that was basically accepted as right – through improving its humanist basics.