

Review published in Hungarian, excerpts
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It is a fascinating and exiting reading. If it were not a large book of more than 400 pages, I could say, it is incredibly thrilling and the best thing would be to read it straight through. It is a summary of the life path, as well as the successes and sufferings of a (Central) European intellectual of exceptional talent; that of his deep faith, the change of his ideology, the humiliations suffered by him and also his international reputation. János Kornai's autobiography (*By Force of Thought Irregular Memoir*, by Osiris Publishing House) faithfully reflects the fate of an intellectual elite that lived in 20th-Century Hungary, was humiliated, ruined, at times also physically destroyed and scattered abroad to a large extent once in a life time or at least every 30 years; the elite, that, regardless of all this and as a clear manifestation of the force of thought, was able to renew itself.

I am not writing a book review now, or else one single sentence would do: I recommend this book for everyone who prefers convincing reasoning to irresponsible statements, who enjoys the scientific precision of a mental process, order, and clear logic, and last, but not least beautiful and comprehensible style as well as an entertaining tone free from any arrogance.

(...)

His career is marked with successes like tenured professorship at one of the world's most prestigious universities, Harvard University, or the title of President of the International Economic Association, and most of all the fact that his works of fundamental importance, such as *Economics of Shortage*; *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Socialism*; and *The Road to a Free Economy*, were published in more than a dozen languages. The *Economics of Shortage* was published in hundred thousand copies in China alone (in case of a scientific work, it is considered to be a huge number even in such a giant country as China), and it sold as a best seller throughout the world, rather than only in Hungary.

(...)

In his books and studies, which have become famous, Kornai explains his view that the socialist system is inherently unfit for any reform. The main reason for this, he says, lies in the ownership structure. State ownership is inevitably deficit making; therefore any reform to it could not do more than simulate, rather than create market conditions and market competition. One merit of Kornai's clear logic and strict mental process is that it inspires the reader to think further and draw new conclusions. (...)