

**Review published in Hungarian, excerpts**  
**Várkonyi, Tibor, Journalist**  
**Magyar Hírlap (daily newspaper)**  
**May 3, 2005**

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It is, of course, not only the task of historians to look back into the distant past. Regardless, it is unusual that an economist, usually excited by current events and attempting to explore the future, recalls what has happened to him and the surrounding world over the last 50 years.

(...)

He reviews the distant past, when he and many of us were young, to explain us the Hungary that had always longed for democracy. He presumably chose the title *By Force of Thought* for a work that is unusual of him in order to make us primarily follow that past period with a logical and an analytical approach, rather than only chronologically. Whoever attempts to interpret this major intellectual work of him will have to apply this mental process.

(...)

He proudly declares that – first of all – it was people similar to him who grasped the significance of a change in the socio-economic system, understanding that a radical break, rather than continuous repair jobs, is needed. In other words, Marxism, as a fundamental theory, had to be completely given up, along, of course, with full acknowledgement of Marx's and Engel's merits as scientists. According to this interpretation, that kind of socialism failed because it had always been inherently unsuitable for fulfilling utopias, rather than because its malicious interpreters had deviated from the original idea. (...) Despite the attempts by the Kádár regime to loosen up and face lift the political system, it had remained the murderer of Imre Nagy and the other democrats. Negotiations with Kádár and making concessions to his party would have been morally unacceptable, and unambiguous resistance was the only moral attitude that a person with high standards could do. One way of this was to show tough emotional resistance and completely refuse any compromise; a manner that also Kornai followed under undoubtedly favourable personal circumstances.

(...)

The book *By Force of Thought* is a heavy intellectual experience, rather than only a reading. It is, however, also good as a reading.