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[Letters to the Editor](#)

Hungary embraces pluralism

The Post's coverage of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's July 26 lecture showed a disconnect between the meaning of his words and their interpretation by political pundits in the United States [["Illiberal Hungary,"](#) editorial, Aug. 17].

The prime minister's remarks were not a rejection of core European values. As he said, Hungary respects "the values of Christianity, freedom and human rights" and "does not reject the fundamental principles of liberalism, such as freedom . . . but it does not make this ideology the central element of state organization."

Among the editorial's many inaccuracies, the allegations that "discriminatory laws aimed at non-Christians and the Roma minority" are a part of Hungary's agenda and that a parallel can be found with the "thugs and charlatans throughout the 20th century — including Hungary's pro-Nazi World War II regime" — are absurd. These shamefully inappropriate allegations were unworthy of The Post.

Hungarians have every right to celebrate the country's Christian heritage, but that doesn't mean Hungary has ceased to be a pluralistic democracy, home to many faiths and identities. Since 2010, this government has been the region's strongest bulwark against right-wing extremism, and it has made the most consistent efforts in the European Union to help Roma-Hungarians. Jewish cultural life in Hungary is undergoing a remarkable renaissance. Media are diverse and free.

Mr. Orbán's focus on a work-based society is not some kind of "Sonderweg" ideological fantasy but rather a viable alternative to the unsustainable welfare state and a pragmatic answer to Hungary's chronically low employment levels.

A robust debate on the pressing socioeconomic challenges of our times is possible only through appreciating the facts, and that debate must be based on a spirit of respect and freedom.

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