Gorbachev period) that, "As a liberal progressive reformer, and friend of the West, Gorbachev is ... a figment of Western imagination." One need not see Gorbachev as a friend or a liberal, of course, to understand that he intended from the outset to change the USSR in fundamental ways.

To be sure, there are some highlights to this book. Chapter 4 by Gerhard Wettig (of the Bundesinstitut für Ostwissenschaftliche und Internationale Studien) discusses important conceptual distinctions made by the Soviets in their view of East-West relations. Finn Sollie, of the Fridtjof Nansen Institute in Norway, provides a balanced and insightful consideration of Northern Flank security issues.

This is not the book it could have been given the talented people involved in the conferences that led to such a volume. Given the timing of its production (during the first two years of Gorbachev's rule), the editors should have done much more to seek up-dated and more in-depth analyses from the contributors. As it stands, Cline, Miller and Kanet have given us a footnote in the record of a waning Cold War.

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The immense accumulation of scholarship on the Holocaust and World War II made possible the emergence of a new genre of literature portraying heroic figures engaged in rescue work in terror-ridden Nazi Europe. The last decade has seen the publication of a spate of books including the sagas of Raoul Wallenberg, Hanna Senesh and Janusz Korczak, drawing on extensive source material as well as previous literature.

Gisi Fleischmann's activities were hitherto known only from historical surveys based mainly on archival research: her own reports and letters smuggled out to the Free World, written in codes (Hebrew and Yiddish idioms, cover-names and so on). A former public figure, head of the Bratislava-based WIZO (Women's International Zionist Organization), she became during the war the heart and soul of the underground "Working Group," which emerged in the summer of 1942 as a response to the mass deportation of Jews in Slovakia. Members of the group maintained regular contact with the Geneva and Istanbul based Jewish organizations engaged in rescue work which also provided funds for their operations. Their extensive activities included keeping track of the first deportees and sending hired, non-Jewish couriers to Poland, smuggling food, clothes and valuables into the ghettos and thus helping the starving inmates to survive.
Gisi Fleischmann sacrificed her private life convinced as she was that her place was to stay on in the darkest hour alongside her people. Already by 1938 she was assisting "stateless" Jews expelled to no-man's land from neighboring Austria. Later she was instrumental in smuggling children from across the Polish border in coal carts and hay wagons to Slovakia and via Hungary sending them to safety and freedom to Wretz Israel. Her own two daughters were sent in 1939 to Mandatory Palestine while she herself remained to attend to her ailing mother and the community.

Her headquarters in Bratislava gradually evolved into a news center receiving secret information from the General government and disseminating it to the outside world by means of special messengers and diplomats. The Working Group was the first to unmask the systematic mass murders perpetrated on European Jewry and to transmit detailed accounts written by fugitives who had miraculously made their way back to Slovakia by June 1942 from the infamous Lublin-Maidanek death camp (aided by Polish and Slovak peasants and smugglers). They also passed along testimonies on Sobibor, Maidanek and Treblinka and the famous "Auschwitz protocols" compiled by two escapees.

The Working Group tried first to prevent further transport, sparing no effort to protect the Jews remaining in the country through a "work stratagem," exhorting the intervention of the local churches as well as of the Vatican. Their most daring enterprise was the so-called "Europa Plan," an attempt to foil the Nazi "Final Solution" by paying a ransom to the Nazi chieftains to save the remnant of European Jewry. Gisi Fleischmann became part of the secret negotiations.

In a letter sent from Bratislava (July 13, 1943) Gisi Fleischmann reflected on Nazi destruction policy thus: "All that creation formed so fairly, all that art and technical knowledge brought to greater perfection, have become meaningless to me, for extermination has been conceived in human brains and performed by human hands." A little over a year later, she herself was finally caught "in the lion's mouth" and upon a special directive of the Gestapo, labelled R.U. (a coded message—"Return Undesirable"), was sent with the last batch of Jews, on October 17, to her death in Auschwitz.

Joan Campion has embarked on a difficult task in her effort to recreate the life and deeds of Gisi Fleischmann. She began her tedious work without being versed in Jewish history or familiar with the complexities of wartime "independent" Slovakia and the languages spoken in this enclave, so to say, ... sans everything. However, she did have an enormous asset: a relentless determination to bring to life the unique personality of a woman of boundless devotion and courage. She collated all the available historical research, piecing together the background material around which to weave the personal story of her subject which she based on interviews with survivors who owe their lives to Gisi Fleischmann and with her daughters and friends.