

## **BRINGING THE HOLOCAUST HOME: THE CONGRSSIONAL MISSION TO LIBERATED CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN APRIL-MAY 1945**

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This study examines the congressional mission to liberated concentration camps in April and May 1945. General Dwight D. Eisenhower requested the congressional mission and newspaper editors and publishers who followed the group, so that the American public might be made more aware of German atrocities in concentration camps and to dispel the belief that the atrocities were war-time propaganda. The congressmen and newspapermen were horrified about what they saw at the German concentration camps, and many reported back to the American public through articles, interviews, speeches, and rallies about the atrocities and conditions in the concentration camps. Upon their return to the U.S., the congressmen published a report on the conditions within the camps, and many of them spoke in Congress and to the public about the need to re-educate Germans, try guilty Germans, and rebuild Germany. The congressmen and newspaper editors and publishers brought legitimacy to the reports of U.S. war correspondents concerning German atrocities and their efforts contributed to constructing a political climate that allowed for and legitimized the Nuremberg Trials, the U.S. Army de-Nazification efforts, and the rebuilding of Germany. To examine this mission newspaper articles from April and May 1945 were collected from thirteen American newspapers, as well as the *Times* of London. Research was also conducted in the personal collections of two of the congressmen who toured Europe at that time, as well as at the National Archives in College Park, MD.