Att undervisa om det ofattbara
En ämnesdidaktisk studie om kunskapsområdet
Förintelsen i skolans historieundervisning
Ylva Wibaeus

Akademisk avhandling för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i pedagogik vid Stockholms universitet som offentligen kommer att försvaras fredagen den 22 oktober 2010 kl. 13.00 i Dahlströmsalen, Campus Konradsberg, hus D, Rålambsvägen 26 D.

Abstract
To Teach the Inconceivable. A study of the Holocaust as a field of knowledge when taught and learnt in upper and upper secondary school

The main purpose is to study the meaning that teachers give the Holocaust as a field of knowledge; the subsequent nature of their teaching; and how it is understood by the students. In connection to this, the purpose is also to discuss the potential of developing a historical consciousness among the students as well as the possibility of bringing insights into the importance of fundamental democratic values. The intentions described by the teachers when teaching the Holocaust as a field of knowledge vary relatively much. Five main themes are found that show these variations. These are: “Never again!”, “Not only the Holocaust!”, “Think critically!”, “Understand the psychology of man!” and “Realize the value of democracy!”. Common to the first two themes is the teachers’ intention to inform students about crimes against humanity during the Nazi rule and/or under communist regimes. These teachers are mainly using tools that illustrate the horrific aspects of the crimes, focusing on the victims and the perpetrators. The three following themes differ from the first two as they focus the teaching on the steps to Auschwitz, instead of on the Holocaust itself. The intention here is to create an understanding of factors that can contribute to an explanation of what made the Holocaust possible. The concept of a historical consciousness is not expressively used or explained in the teaching, although it is obvious that some of the teachers expect their students to think in the dimensions of the past, the present and the future, as well as understand the relation between these dimensions.

Keywords: teaching and learning history in school, Holocaust as a field of knowledge; teachers’ intentions, students understanding, historical consciousness, fundamental democratic values.

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