

Abstract

Historian and numismatist Sture Bolin (1900–63) spent his career in Lund. He succeeded Lauritz Weibull as professor of history in 1938 and later established Sweden's first university department of history.

Bolin was a political conservative, a nationalist and an active member of the Swedish National Youth Association (SNU) from his teens onward. He was inspired by conservative French restoration authors de Bonald and de Maistre. He was not very interested in German nationalism, and nor did he sympathise with Nazism.

After Germany invaded Denmark and Norway in 1940, Bolin left the SNU. His contemporaries did not see him as a German supporter.

In 1996, more than 30 years after Bolin died, historian Sverker Oredsson described Bolin as an “active anti-democrat, racist and i.a. ideologue for the Swedish National Youth Association”. Students in Lund were markedly pro-German during the war, for which Oredsson pointed to propaganda before the war with Bolin as alleged ideologue.

Oredsson's judgement of Bolin became widely disseminated despite the fact that it has no support in the sources. The idea of Sture Bolin as a proto-Nazi propagandist is an historical factoid *sensu* Martin Kylhammar, that is, an unproven statement presented in an authoritative publication with wide distribution. There is in fact nothing to suggest that Bolin's influence made students in Lund during the war more pro-German.