

# Jünger, Ernst

By [Richard Kühl](#)



## **Ernst Jünger (1895-1998)**

This is a signed photograph of Ernst Jünger wearing his Pour le Mérite, Prussia's highest order of merit.

Unknown photographer: Ernst Jünger, black-and-white photograph, n.p., n.d. [after 1918]; source: Lebendiges Museum Online, Deutsches Historisches Museum, Do2 97/1948, <http://www.dhm.de/lemo/objekte/pict/97005473/index.html>.

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Jünger, *Ernst*

(Hans Sturm)

Writer

Born 28 March 1895 in Heidelberg, Germany

Died 17 February 1998 in Riedlingen, Germany

## **Summary**

Ernst Jünger was a German writer. His book *Storm of Steel* (*In Stahlgewittern*) is considered one of the best-known literary accounts of the experience of the First World War.

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## Early Life

Ernst Jünger (1895-1998) grew up in a middle-class German home. Just after finishing his secondary education in 1914, he volunteered and was sent with an [infantry](#) regiment to the [western front](#). He was promoted to lieutenant at the end of 1915, and he participated in the [Battle of the Somme](#) in 1916, the Battle of Cambrai in 1917, and the [Spring Offensive in 1918](#). The “*Stoßtruppführer*” (assault group leader) was awarded the *Pour le mérite* in 1918

## Storm of Steel and “New Nationalism”

After the war, Jünger served first in the new *Reichswehr* (German military defense forces), during which time he wrote *In Stahlgewittern* (1920, english translation: *The Storm of Steel*, 1929), *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* (*The Struggle as an Inner Experience*, 1922), and the novel *Sturm* (1923). His initially self-published debut, based on his own wartime diaries,<sup>1</sup> described the war from the point of view of a front-line officer. Because of the precise details of the depicted wartime experiences, including the horrors of war, the book was partly received positively by [pacifists](#) and among others, had an influence on [Erich Maria Remarque \(1898-1970\)](#), author of [All Quiet on the Western Front](#).

However, that was not Jünger’s intention. After leaving the *Reichswehr* in 1923, he became a prominent character of the soldierly “new [nationalism](#).” In 1924, *Storm of Steel* was republished in a nationalistic version (which he took back in 1934).<sup>2</sup> The heroic portrayal of a new type of soldier, born out of [modern warfare](#), was now put forward. It was followed by *Feuer und Blut* (“Fire and Blood”, 1925), *Das Wäldchen 125* (1925, english translation *Copse 125*, 1930), and numerous political articles in nationalistic journals, in which he preached against the Weimar Republic. He wanted a “national”, “social”, “armed” and authoritarian future state (“state of the front-line soldiers”) that would eliminate the “bourgeois order” of the Weimar “system” and work towards a new World War.<sup>3</sup> Jünger’s relations to the Nazi Party were characterized by a certain distance from an early point in time, as his goal was not to affect the masses, but to educate and mobilize a revolutionary elite. He disapproved of the “legalistic” methods of the Nazi Party.

## “Planetary” Vision

Around 1930, Jünger turned away from direct political agitation. In 1929, *Das abenteuerliche Herz* (“The Adventurous Heart”), was released as another way of achieving the “German revolution”; at the same time, the book established his literary reputation as an author of “magical realism”. Later works, especially his major essay *Der Arbeiter* (“The Worker”, 1932), marked Jünger’s “planetary” change of perspective and the beginning of his perception as a time-analytical solitary person who interprets history with a cold “stereoscopic vision”.

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## Notes

1. Jünger, Ernst: *Kriegstagebuch 1914-1918* (edited by Helmuth Kiesel), Stuttgart 2010. ↑
2. Jünger, Ernst: *In Stahlgewittern*. Historisch-kritische Ausgabe, 2 volumes (edited by Helmuth Kiesel), Stuttgart 2013. ↑
3. Jünger, Ernst: *Politische Publizistik 1919-1933* (edited by Sven Olaf Berggötz), Stuttgart 2001. ↑

## Selected Bibliography

- [Kiesel, Helmuth: \*Ernst Jünger. Die Biographie\*, Munich, 2007: Siedler.](#)
- [Schwilk, Heimo: \*Ernst Jünger. Ein Jahrhundertleben. Die Biografie\*, Munich, 2010: Piper.](#)

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## External Links

- [Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, with Ernst Jünger's estate \(Institutional Website\)](#)
- [Juenger, Ernst: Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis, 1943 \(Deutsche Nationalbibliothek\) \(Book\)](#)

## Metadata

### Regional Section(s)

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