

*Below: An image of an early 1900's Gymnasium in Germany, similar to the one Renner may have attended.*



The Nazi party grew out of smaller political groups with a nationalist orientation that formed in the last years of World War I. In the early months of 1918, a party called the *Freier Ausschuss für einen deutschen Arbeiterfrieden* (Free Committee for a German Workers' Peace) was created in Bremen, Germany. On March 7, 1918, Anton Drexler, an avid German nationalist, formed a branch of this league in Munich called the Committee of Independent Workmen.

Drexler was a local locksmith in Munich who had been a member of the militarist Fatherland Party during World War I, and was bitterly opposed to the armistice of November 1918 and to the revolutionary upheavals that followed in its wake. Drexler followed the typical views of militant nationalists of the day, but he also accused international capitalism of being a Jewish-dominated movement and denounced capitalists for war profiteering in World War I.



**Above: Anton Drexler helped to form the original German Worker's Party, which would precede the Nazi Party.**

Renner attended a Gymnasium, a secondary school where one studied the humanities. Nine years of studying Greek and Latin provided students with a ticket to higher education. Renner chose to study art after the Gymnasium, attending several academies where he studied painting and architecture, culminating in his final year of schooling in 1900. He valued his education but felt that upon entering the real world he lacked any ideals and lived in an "artificial world".

Renner began his career as a commissioned artist, painting landscapes for various organizations. Though trained as an artist, he realized his

desire to bring industry and art together to create visually appealing products, and chose to produce things that had a particular use. After meeting and eventually marrying his wife Annie, Renner became a father in 1907, forcing him to take a job with a steady income to support his family.

He found work at the Munich Publishing Trade as a book designer, designing book spines and covers. Renner was able to use what he had learned as a painter in his book illustration, aspiring to find the

balance between type and illustration in his work. In 1910 Renner became the co-founder of a small illustration school in Munich.

In 1910 Paul Renner joined the *Deutscher Werkbund* (German Work Federation), which was a German association of artists, architects, designers, and industrialists. The *Werkbund* would become an important event in the development of modern architecture and industrial design, particularly in the later creation of the Bauhaus school of design. Its initial purpose was to establish a partnership of product manufacturers with design professionals to improve the competitiveness of German

*Right: The Deutscher Werkbund became an important event in the development of modern architecture and industrial design, particularly in the later creation of the Bauhaus.*

