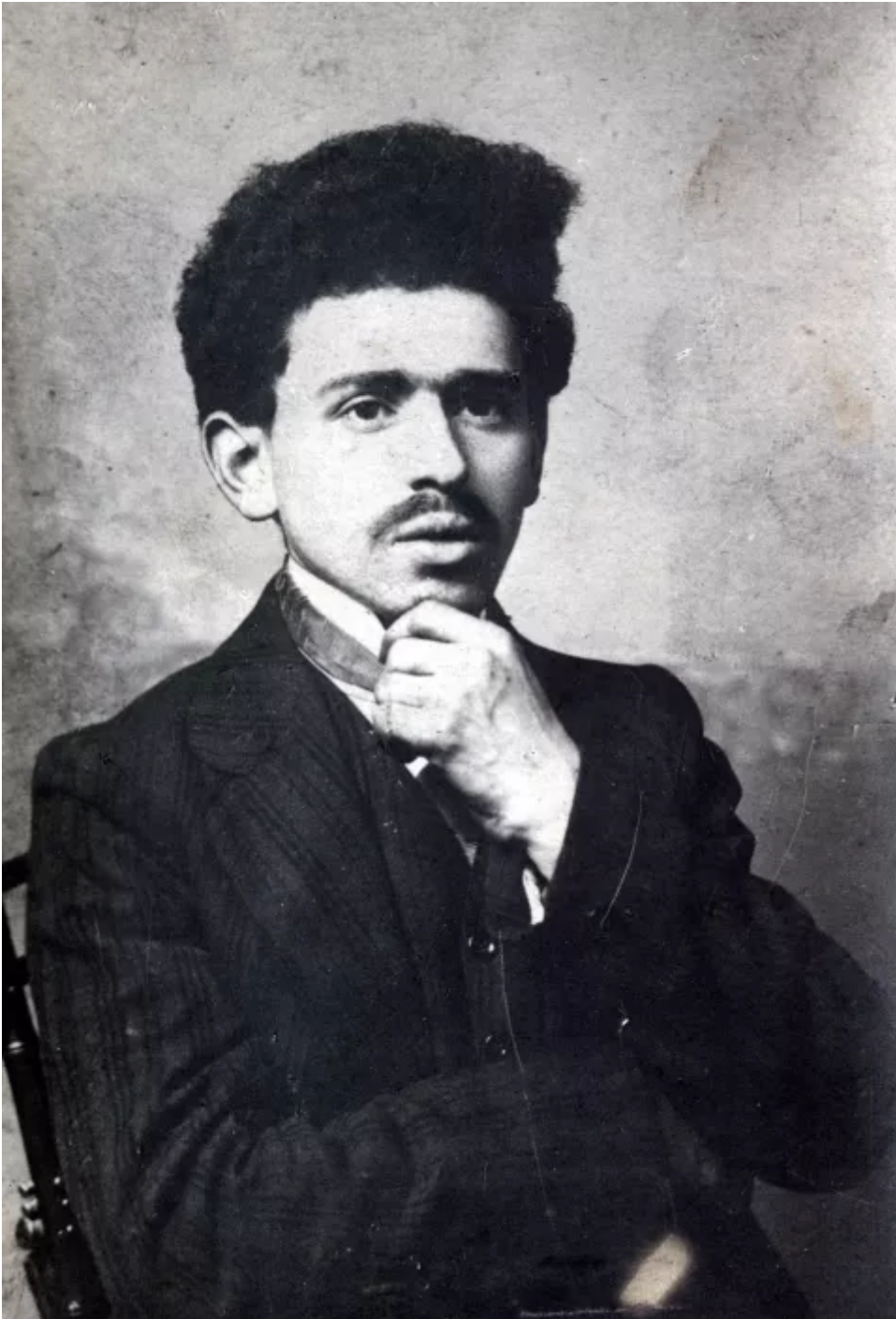


Minna Birman's Father Mordko Birman



This is my father Mordko Birman. This photo was taken in Warsaw in 1912.

My father Mordko Birman was born in Warsaw in 1895. He was the oldest child in the family and there were numerous children born after him, which was a usual thing with every poor Jewish family. Grandfather Moisey said that there was no need for my father to go to cheder. A poor Jew had to learn his craft. My father was educated at home and the only language he spoke was Yiddish. He became an apprentice of a Jewish shoemaker. At 17 my father joined the Zionist Jewish socialist party of workers [Paolei Zion] [Editor's note: the social democratic party Paolei Zion (workers of Zion) was founded by Ber Borokhov in Poltava in 1906. In April 1917 it branched a

radical socialist party Paolei Zion. The seat of its central committee was in Odessa. The social democratic party Paolei Zion adopted the doctrines of Bolshevik ideology and existed in the USSR until 1928. Soviet authorities liquidated it]. My father was a shoemaker's assistant for some time. He gave his mother his earnings and paid Party fees. He had tuberculosis since childhood. They used oxygen enrichment to cure him. As a result, my father had only one lung left. He wasn't recruited to the army due to his health condition. In 1913 my father was sent in exile to Siberia for his revolutionary activities. He was to accommodate in a village in Verholensk district of Irkutsk province [Editor's note: Verholensk district of Irkutsk region was a place for criminal and political convicts in czarist Russia (from the second quarter of the 19th century)]. My father made cone stocks in the taiga and was paid for his work. My father's younger sister Rieva told me how my father sent them some money to them in Warsaw and they could buy potatoes and herring and she went to buy some coal from a coal seller. It was like a feast. In 1917 the term of my father's exile was over and he decided to go to Odessa to improve his health condition in the south. He was hoping to have no problem finding a job at the shoe factory in Odessa. During his trip back my father felt ill. He started hemoptysis and arriving in Odessa my father had to sit at the railway station all exhausted. This was where my father met my future mother.