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BROOKSIDE REPERTORY THEATRE presents

**“Basha Rubenchek from Minsk, Comrade of Petaluma” by Mae Ziglin Meidav
at the Berkeley City Club Mar. 26-May 3**

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Preproduction Publicity Photos by Marty Sohl available Late February at www.brooksiderep.org

The Russian Revolution comes to a Petaluma chicken-ranch and stirs up the right-wing locals during the post-World War One Pro-America “Red Scare” days in Brookside Rep’s latest offering. Mae Ziglin Meidav and her Berkeley-based theatre group presents “Basha Rubenchek from Minsk, Comrade of Petaluma” at the historic Berkeley City Club on Durant St. opening in late March and playing through early May.

“My great-auntie Basha inspired the story which starts in pre-Revolutionary Minsk, follows Basha on her odyssey to Kenya, and their flight to California, where they encounter Vigilantes and anti-Communism mixed with anti-Semitism,” Meidav commented. “Basha was full of life and a real revolutionary caught between having to choose between two ideologies, two cultures, two ways of life, two countries. She was there during the pogroms in the Minsk Ghetto, she went to Africa to a mail-order marriage, she came to Petaluma and was instrumental in the co-operative movement there. Her story appears on the first page on the popular history Ken Kann’s ‘Comrades and Chicken Ranchers: The Story of a California Jewish Community.’ Of course, I’ve dramatized it with her caught between two loves which represents those choices.”

Meidav notes that many of the abuses of that time are happening again, and the revelation of that little-noted history can provide surprise and satisfaction. “I always thought that Aunt Basha was secretive about using her name because of the McCarthy era, and then I found that her fears came from the “Red Scare” oppressive tactics of the US government from 1917-23!”

“Basha Rubenchek” received a California Living History Center Award. Meidav first placed “Basha ...” on stage at the Nina Wise solo performance workshop. The play had a staged reading in San Francisco in 2004. Meidav is the recipient of the California Arts Council Playwrights Fellowship Award for a two-act play “Delicate Pin Stripes.” She has penned “Chanukah Is Not the Jewish Christmas,” “Island Heat,” and “Speak Softly & Carry a Big Computer,” and runs the ongoing Brookside Rep’s Writers’ Workshop in Berkeley. Brookside Rep was a winner in the SF Fringe winner of Best Collected Shorts in 2003.

This is the second drama about an historical figure undertaken by Meidav and Brookside Rep. Last spring “Franz Kafka’s Love Life, Letters and Hallucinations” played at the Berkeley City Club. John McMullen directs again and Don Cate returns to design set and lights with Jesse Amoroso costuming.

“Basha Rubenchek from Minsk, Comrade of Petaluma” plays at the Berkeley City Club, March 26-May 3. Tickets through Brown Paper Tickets 800-838-3006. Info www.brooksiderep.org

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