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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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12 Publicity Photos by David Allen (ATTACHED) and available at:

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Brookside Repertory Theatre presents “Basha Rubenchek of Minsk, Comrade of Petaluma” by Mae Ziglin Meidav from March 26 thru May 3 at the Berkeley City Club. The subject of a book (“Comrades and Chicken Farmers” by Kenneth L. Kann) and a musical (“Chutzpah” by Pauline Pfandler), the real-life Basha Rubenchek was a radical Jew who witnessed the Minsk pogroms. A rebellious ghetto girl whose parents send her to Catholic school, her story carries all the anomalies and conflicts that make for good drama.

Meidav’s play tells the story of the pull of social justice and the Revolution on this young woman, her love affair with her comrade in pre-revolutionary Minsk, and her impulsive immigration to Kenya for an arranged marriage during the turbulent times before and during WWI.

She comes to Petaluma to found the famous Jewish Chicken Ranch (read, *kibbutz*) only to find the same anti-Communist, anti-Semitic forces she battled in Minsk. The battles between passion, tradition and “the revolution”—and night-riders— makes for an exciting tale and a lively evening of theatre.

”It was a violent time. My aunt and her community were attacked by vigilantes. The American Legion and IWW had gun battles and lynchings up in Washington State,” Meidav said.

“The real Basha changed her name back and forth to confuse the federal agents in the days of the Palmer Raids and later the American fascist Silver Shirts. During World War I, Congress passed the Immigration and Sedition acts that made it against the law to speak against the government and they could deport you for it. They broke into the Mother Jones magazine office and persecuted everyone on their subscriber list, and deported Emma Goldman and others. The violations of people’s right were not unlike the last eight years.

“I’ve tried to get some history of the time into the play, but the draw is naturally the conflicts in her heart,” said Meidav. The play received a California Living History Center Award

“Basha Rubenchek” is directed by Lia Metz, winner of San Diego’s Aubrey Award. The title role is played by NYU grad Sarah Eismann, supported by Brian O’Connor, Reuben Alvear, Theresa Miller, Biko Eisen-Martin, Alan Badger, Jeffrey Trescott, and Yelena Segal. Scene design and lighting by Don Cate, sound by Bradford Chapin, and costumes by Jessie Amoroso.

Meidav received 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.” She runs the ongoing Brookside Rep’s Writers’ Workshop in Berkeley. Brookside Rep was a winner in the SF Fringe of Best Collected Shorts in 2003, and last May presented “Franz Kafka’s Love Life” by Meidav at Berkeley City Club

Performances March 26-May 3 Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 pm, Sundays at 5pm at Berkeley City Club, 2315 Durant Avenue (between Dana and Ellsworth Sts.) in Berkeley.

Tickets 1-800-838-3006 or on the website www.brooksiderep.org

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