

Soviet-Born 'Peace Baby' Is Home

By J. L. Pimsleur

The Alameda parents of a baby born in the Soviet Union have returned home and say they were "overwhelmed" by the response of the Soviet people.

Gerald Krumland, 41, and Ana Costa, 31, brought nine-pound Alexander Krumland back to their home over the weekend, 17 days after he was born in a Leningrad hotel.

In fulfilling his parents' gesture for international good will, Alexander became an instant celebrity throughout the Soviet Union.

Krumland said that he and his wife decided in March, shortly after she became pregnant, to have the baby, their first, in Russia. "It was a time of extreme tension between the United States and the Soviet Union," said Krumland. "We felt compelled to make some personal gesture of peace and love."

The idea of having their baby in Russia, he said, came to him while he was meditating. "It just popped into my head like a lightbulb," he said.

They decided not to inform the



Gerald Krumland and Ana Costa held Alexander outside the Leningrad hotel where he was born

authorities of either country of their intention until the baby was born.

The couple is "not particularly political," said Krumland.

He is a Vietnam veteran and a commercial pilot for the California Air Charter Co., an interbank correspondence and parcel delivery service based in Oakland. His wife is a court reporter.

They do, however, have an eclectic background. Vietnam, Krumland said, "turned my head around" about war. He is a Lutheran, he said, and his wife (who was born on the Portuguese island of Madeira) was reared a "strict Catholic." They were married by a rabbi and spent their honeymoon at a Zen Center in Marin County.

The Krumlands planned to check into a maternity hospital in Russia, but the baby was six days early and had to be delivered by his father, at 5:55 a.m. on September 6, in Leningrad's ornate Pribaltiskaya Hotel.

Within hours, the news had

spread. The couple did not have to seek out the Soviet press, said Krumland. The hotel informed a reporter for a Soviet youth paper — with a circulation of 11 million — of the birth. They were besieged by Soviet television, and a press conference was set up.

Krumland said he and his wife were "astounded" by the reaction: "We received over 2000 letters from 300 cities in Russia, plus hundreds of gifts and packages from all over Russia."

A man in his 80s who had fought in World War I, the Russian civil war and World War II came to the hotel to deliver his letter personally.

Krumland said that when he and his wife went to the Soviet Union, they were "full of fear and anxiety."

The fears were groundless. Alexander, automatically a U.S. citizen, is not a Soviet citizen because neither parent is. However, because he was born on Russian soil, if he returns at the age of conscription he will have to serve in the Soviet army.

"We hope that he will never have to serve in any army," said Krumland. "That was the point of the trip. He is now, and will always be, a citizen of the world."