Few persons in history have been so influential yet so ignored by historians. With the fall of communism in Russia and in the Soviet Bloc, a wealth of information is just now being presented for analysis. For decades the world has been kept in the dark surrounding key events in Russian history. Only now is there light being shown upon the country’s most prominent figures.

For the past 190 years, the legend of Alexander I has simply been a footnote mired between the salacious rule of his grandmother Catherine the Great and the formidable and dominating rule of Josef Stalin. However, for over four centuries Russia served as the deterrent to any ruler seeking to control the greater parts of Europe and enforcer of European peace settlements. It was not until the rule of Tsar Alexander that western Europeans saw how one visionary could both thwart global domination and at the same time juggle the means to achieve it. In this essay I will use an existing leadership model to illustrate the significance of Tsar Alexander I as a model of meta-human leadership.

The study of leadership has evolved greatly over the last 50 years. The conclusion of world-war 2 and the cold war has led to the development of numerous theories regarding leadership paradigms. As the dynamic of great leadership changes with the evolving of societal structure, the development of alternative leadership models becomes necessary. For the purpose of my study, the Perruci model of Latin American leadership will be used.

The Perruci model, first introduced at the 2002 Art of Management and Organization Conference, dictates that the study of great leaders leads to classification
into three levels: human, superhuman, and meta-human\textsuperscript{1}. The first level of leadership, stresses that leadership is maintained in the same manner that ordinary individuals thrive. According to Perruci, in the Human level, “Great Leaders are associated with ordinary deeds that we all share, particularly those that characterize our human experience on earth -life and death.”\textsuperscript{2}

Determining classification of leadership by viewing the criteria in a progression, this leads to analysis on the superhuman level. The superhuman level demands that leaders exhibit extraordinary qualities that bring a person above the status of regular human leadership. Examples of extraordinary qualities are: extreme levels of physical endurance, ability to communicate at levels that exceed normal standards, and the defiance of a tragic fate despite historical conditions.

Satisfaction of the above criteria brings the study to the final and most prolific of all levels of leadership, meta-human leadership. According to Perruci, meta-human leadership usually demands that leaders die before attaining this level.\textsuperscript{3} Transformation from superhuman leadership to meta-human leadership is dependent upon the leaders’ ability to sustain his/her legacy after death, survive as an icon through artistic expression, and development of godlike status in his/her own country or abroad. It is with this model in mind, that the study of Tsar Alexander I begins.

The first aspect of meta-human leadership status that I will address is Alexander’s status as a national icon. Development of iconic status in Alexander came from the circumstances that surrounded his first five years of rule. Being enlightened to western

\textsuperscript{1}Gamaliel Perruci. \textit{Study of ‘Great’ Leaders in Latin America}. (Presented at the second art of management and organization conference in Paris, France, September 7-10, 2004).
\textsuperscript{2}Ibid. 7
\textsuperscript{3}Ibid, 8.
political and philosophical theories Alexander successfully modernized the highly traditional monarchy in Russia and began the process of creating a constitutional monarchy. It was Alexander who felt that the key to successful constitutional rule was the abolition of serfdom, an institution that dominated Russia since its creation in the 13th century.\footnote{Palmer, Alan. Alexander I: Tsar of War and Peace. (New York, Evanston, and London. Harper and Row Publishers. 1974). Pg. 53} Alexander was quoted as saying, “It is better to abolish serfdom from above than to await the day when it will begin to abolish itself from below.”\footnote{Ibid, 287.}

In 1801, Alexander in cooperation with his secret committee of enlightened thinkers: Mikhail Speransky, Prince Adam Czartoryski, Nicholas Novosiltsev, and Frederic Cesar de LaHarpe, Alexander began creating a Russian model of constitutional rule. Though the process took much longer than Alexander wanted, Alexander and Speransky collectively wrote the first formal constitution in Russian history.\footnote{Strakhovsky, Leonid Ivan. Alexander I of Russia: The Man who Defeated Napoleon. (New York. W.W. Norton & Company. 1947). Pg. 101} In addition to the creation of the constitution, in 1832 seven years after his death, Nicholas I codified the laws of Russia and true political structure was outlined in terms of senator term length and primogeniture (monarch succession), this was the design of Alexander. Prior to codification of law, Alexander began the implementation of branches of government and constitutional rule. This successfully ended autocratic rule of Russia and proposed to declare Alexander as the last of the Romanov monarchs. This fateful step solidified his legacy with the people as being the ruler who sought to give power to the masses.

Alexander’s iconic status while great in terms of domestic improvements did little to cement the legacy of Alexander outside Russia. However, the world would soon come
to see his genius as his successful manipulation of treatises and defeating of Napoleon’s Grand Army would promote his legacy on a global stage.

As chief diplomat, Alexander would begin to form alliances with European monarchs, namely British Lord Hawkesbury and Frederick William III of Prussia. Alexander welcomed various world leaders and corresponded with countless others, including American president Thomas Jefferson and the Marquis de Lafayette. These relationships would pave the way for the drafting of the Holy Alliance and would later work settle regional conflicts in Europe.

Alexander’s belief in bilateral negotiations could best be described in a quote made in favor of the European Coalition,

"Why could not one submit to it? The positive rights of nations, assure the privilege of neutrality, insert the obligation of never beginning war until all the resources which the mediation of a third party could offer have been exhausted, having by this means brought to light the respective grievances, and tried to remove them? It is on such principles as these that one could proceed to a general pacification, and give birth to a league of which the stipulations would form, so to speak, a new code of the law of nations, which, sanctioned by the greater part of the nations of Europe, would without difficulty become the immutable rule of the cabinets, while those who should try to infringe it would risk bringing upon themselves the forces of the new union."

Alexander’s deep desire for unification led to compliance on the part of British Lord Hawkesbury, and the dispatch of 11,000 Russian troops to the Ionian Islands. This began the first unified act of opposition to Napoleon’s army by a collection of nations. Though Alexander was increasingly successful in developing alliances and creating

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8 Jefferson. Ibid, XV. Lafayette. Ibid 287
legitimacy of Russian policies in global circles, it is his military conquests that put his name above all others in Russian history.

Initially viewing Napoleon as a “great patriot and champion of reform”, Alexander saw through the layers and came to believe that Napoleon was in-fact a “the most famous tyrant the world has produced.”\textsuperscript{10} Despite this feeling of ill will, Alexander would be compliant and would engage in organization of alliances, all the time preparing for the defeat of the Grand Army.

The Franco-Russian Alliance successfully fought for the removal of Finland from Sweden, the expansion of southern Russia to the Danube, and the preparation for invasion of Austria. However, before Napoleon entered into Austria, Alexander refused to provide troop support to the Grand Army believing “there should not be a crushing of Austria simply out of existence”.\textsuperscript{11} This blatant defiance of the alliance prompted Napoleon to invade Russia in the summer of 1812. With this invasion began what is now referred to as The Great Retreat.

The 600,000 troops Napoleon marched into Russia began to experience heavy casualties and disease. At Bordonio, Kutuzov entrenched the Russian troops and staved off advance for over 3 weeks, while at the same time cutting of supply lines that ran to the Grand Army.\textsuperscript{12} At this time Alexander ordered a full scale citizen attack on the remaining supply lines, and also called for division of Kutuzov’s troops for the purpose of cutting off Napoleon’s retreat back across the Danube.\textsuperscript{13} This underhanded chicanery

\textsuperscript{10} Ibid, 35.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, 49.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, 244.
on the part of Alexander led to the defeat of the greatest army ever assembled, and the promotion of Alexander as the most sovereign of all European rulers.

Having achieved iconic status in Russia and abroad through the progressive series of domestic reforms and his staggering military victories, the study of Alexander’s leadership shifts to the second criterion; one’s influence on others and policy after death.\textsuperscript{14}

The first indication of Alexander’s influence continuing to dominate politics posthumously came through examination of political reforms under the next two regimes, those of Nicholas I and Alexander II.

Under Nicholas I Russia experienced a continuation of Alexander’s policies. There would be continued emphasis on education and the arts. During this period Russian literature began to be dispersed and subsequently respected around the world.\textsuperscript{15} Writers such as Pushkin, Gogol, and Turgenev produced various works including the first Russian novels. In addition to the literature produced, under Nicholas major Russian composers such as Tchaikovsky and Mussorgsky experienced musical freedoms previously unheard of in Russia.

While Russia continued its open policies in education and the arts Nicholas continued to handle negotiations in the concert of Europe. Under Nicholas the Holy Alliance saw the continuation of peace, even up to the Revolutions of 1848. Nicholas single handedly crushed the November Uprising in Poland and reinstituted the Polish


Constitution.\footnote{Ibid, 410-411.} In Hungary, Nicholas used his military might to support the Hapsburgs and again crushed revolt among the citizens.\footnote{Ibid, 411.}

Though Nicholas was to blame for the destruction of the European alliances and the eventual defeat of Russia in the Crimean War, his domestic policies and network of alliances were done in the manner Alexander preferred. His marriage to Alexandra Feodorovna the daughter of Frederick William III of Prussia helped to secure the alliance that Alexander worked so hard to establish years earlier. Nicholas’ efforts to continue the progress of Alexander indicate a reverence for the policies of Alexander and his continued influence over the throne despite his alleged death in 1825.

The death of Nicholas I in 1855 brought Alexander II to the throne. As namesake of Alexander, the heir apparent began his vigorous continuation of the liberal reforms first initiated under Alexander I. After the negotiations of peace following the end of the Crimean War, Alexander II began the full emancipation of all serfs in Russia.\footnote{Ibid, 385.} As emperor, Alexander II gained the support of the masses and began rebuilding the Russian bureaucracy to pre-Nicholas status. The practical nature of Alexander II led to his being labeled “Russia’s Great Reformer”, as it was under Alexander II that all of serfdom was abolished, the military was re-organized, the penal codes were simplified, and local government was established by the building of smaller regional districts.\footnote{Ibid, 337.}

The great reforms initiated by Alexander allowed many to compare him to his grandfather Alexander I. This comparison would become even more relevant as prior to his assassination, Alexander II become increasingly involved in the Enlightenment
movement.\textsuperscript{20} His enlightenment philosophies led to his drafting of a plan from remaking Russia into a utopian community. In his idealized community, Alexander II hoped to abolish all forms of military and all forms of government.\textsuperscript{21} Fear of Alexander’s fall into enlightened despotism led the public to become weary of his actions. His efforts to cut sections of the bureaucracy including the naval sector and the ministry of defense prompted his assassination in 1866.\textsuperscript{22}

Despite his fall into enlightened despotism, Alexander II is widely regarded as one of the most influential tsars in Russian history. His efforts to continue the liberal reforms initiated under his grandfather signify respect for Alexander’s plan of creating in Russia a highly democratic modernized society.

In the case of both Nicholas and Alexander II there were obvious attempts to prolong the actions of their predecessor Alexander I. Though each succeeded in continuing aspects of Alexander’s platform, (Nicholas’ continued openness to the arts and education, and Alexander’s continued emancipation of the serfs) the ultimate desire of Alexander (the modernization of Russia to an industrial democratic society) appeared to be unfulfilled. However, in each case actions of continuation further cemented Alexander’s status as the most dynamic tsar in the history of Russia.

Following evaluation of Alexander’s influence over policy following his death, the study of leadership calls for us to examine the final aspect of the meta-human leadership model; the mysterious death. The ever illusive qualification of leadership, the mysterious death serves as the final act to establish a legacy of great leadership. Leaders

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\item \textsuperscript{20} Graham, Stephen. \textit{Tsar of Freedom: The Life and Reign of Tsar Alexander II}. (Hamden, Conn. Archon Press. 1968). pg. 268
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid, 267-270
\item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid, 302
\end{itemize}
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who have obtained the meta-human leadership level include: Jesus of Nazareth, Evita Duarte Peron, Vladimir Lenin, Che Guevara and now Alexander I of Russia.

In the case of each, a dramatic ordeal ensued over the display or finding of the body postmortem. In the case of Jesus, the apparent resurrection and appearance following crucifixion qualifies him for meta-human status. Ernesto Che Guevara’s legacy of meta-human leadership was cemented as his body was exhumed from his Bolivian grave and sent to Cuba for enshrinement in 1997. The story of Alexander’s death follows the aforementioned models in similar ways.

The legend of Alexander’s death begins with his apparent succumbing to illness in 1825. Three days prior to his death a letter was mailed to the cathedral at St.Petersburg declaring his official resignation as Tsar of Russia. Alexander who was rumored to be ill had left Moscow and had retired to a villa in Taganrog, a village in the Ural Mountains. From his home in Taganrog Alexander performed his last acts as Tsar, declaring Nicholas successor over the rightful heir Constantine. In addition to his act of primogeniture, Alexander transcribed a series of mandates for Nicholas to follow as the next Tsar. These documents while never found, were said to be the same documents that Catherine had left for him to follow. This series of acts came to an abrupt end as on December 1, 1825, Tsar Alexander I was declared dead.

The myth of his death would continue to intensify as it was released that due to lack of sufficient medical practitioners, an embalming would not be performed. This would be significant as the funeral procession would not include a public viewing of the

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24 Ibid, 223.
Speculation continued to arise due to the funeral procession occurring six weeks after his alleged death. It was during this time that a British ambassador claimed to witness Alexander boarding a ship bound for the Mediterranean. To further suspicion, Elizabeth Feodorovna the wife of Alexander, was absent during his funeral as it was circulated that she herself had become increasingly ill and was unable to make the journey to Moscow and then to St. Petersburg.

Despite these setbacks the funeral procession began and the coffin of Alexander was drawn by horse from Taganrog to St. Petersburg. It was in St. Petersburg that the body of Alexander would join those of the Romanov dynasty that preceded him in death. Entrance into the city of Moscow led to mass hysteria as the coffin of Alexander was left partially open showing only his feet. Again suspicion grew as the feet of the body in the coffin were very small, whereas the feet of Alexander were rumored to be very large.

The coffin finally made its way to St. Petersburg where the body would lie in state for 2 weeks before burial on March 1, 1825. The coffin would be closed by officials for it was claimed the pungent odor from his lack of embalming would prohibit his body to lie in state.

As years pass speculation of his death continued as a letter was intercepted from his wife Elizabeth to Siberian monk named Feodor Kuzmich. The letter mentioned the plan to reunite in the summer of 1830 at their old home in Taganrog. The letter also indicated that the couple had successfully boarded a yacht to the Mediterranean following

26 Ibid, 224.
27 Ibid, 228.
30 Ibid, 225.
the faking of his death. At the same time a letter was asserting his existence under the alias of Feodor Kuzmich, presents arrived at the palace in St. Petersburg for the daughter of Alexander’s mistress Maria Naryshkina. The presents while arriving 14 years late were forwarded under the name Feodor Kuzmich.31

News of this chicanery on the part of Alexander prompted officials to exhume the body of Alexander from his locker in the St.Petersburg Cathedral. In 1836, citizens stormed the cathedral and broke into the vault only to find the coffin that was contained the body of Alexander was empty.32 Russian officials asserted that the body was never buried in St. Petersburg Cathedral but was in-fact buried at his boyhood home in Gatchina. In 1866, Alexander II himself ordered the opening of the coffin in the monastery that was said to be that of Alexander I. Again the casket was empty, and so the legend of Alexander I lived on.33

The legacy of Alexander I would be further cemented as in 1837 just 12 years after his apparent death a monolith would be erected in his name at the Isaac Cathedral in St. Petersburg. Designed by French sculptor Auguste de Montferrand in 1834, it stands 80 feet and is capped by a 10 foot red granite depiction of Alexander I.34 The inscription on the monolith read, “To Alexander I from Grateful Russia”. The monument depicted Alexander as an angel carrying a bible in his right hand and a cruciform sword in his left. However, on a windy night in September 1838, the wings of Alexander fell off and crumbled below. The following morning spectators gathered and believed it an act of

31 Ibid, 226.
33 Ibid, 416.
34 Ibid, 416.
divine providence that further suggested Alexander was in-fact alive.\footnote{Almedingen, Edith Martha. \textit{The Emperor Alexander I}. (London. The Bodley Head. 1964). Pg 229.} This depiction of Alexander as a wingless angel still stands today in monument square in St.Petersburg.

In the study of Tsar Alexander I as a meta-human leader we see fulfillment of major qualifiers according to the Perruci model. Alexander’s defeating of the Napoleon at Bordonio and the subsequent defeat of the Grand Army suggest iconic status in Russian history as a brilliant military strategist. His successful manipulation of the Treaty of Tilsit, organizer of the Second and Third Coalitions, and drafting of the Holy Alliance suggest iconic status as the great peacemaker of Europe.

The continuance of liberal reforms initiated by Alexander during the reigns of Nicholas I and Alexander II suggest a reverence for his legacy and a desire to carry favor with the masses who still loved Alexander. Specifically, Nicholas’s actions to promote education and the arts signify his desire to see the promotion of Alexander’s enlightened platform, and Alexander the Second’s reordering of the military, redrafting of the penal code, and the full emancipation of the serfs suggests an extension of the legacy of his grandfather Alexander I.

Finally, the mysterious death fiasco that ensued suggests the public’s unwillingness to see their leader depart so quickly. Having reigned for only 24 years and dying a mysterious death at the age of 48, Alexander left the throne far too early. His love for the enlightenment and his fall into mysticism did nothing but give credence to those who believed he faked his own death as a retreat from the public spotlight. The numerous accounts of his boarding a ship for the Mediterranean or his retirement to a Siberian
monastery under the alias of Feodor Kuzmich were only validated by accounts of the British Ambassador and his estranged wife Elizabeth.  

In conclusion, the circumstances that surround the life and times of Alexander I are so controversial it is a wonder his legacy hasn’t been more fully explored by historians. In researching I found only a few titles dedicated to his life, and most dealt specifically with his manipulation of Napoleon during the height of Napoleon’s reign. Alexander’s legacy continues to be that of the “Enigmatic Czar”, the man who defeated Napoleon, secured peace in Europe, then died far too early. It is my belief that as Russia becomes a more open and westernized society, the legacy of Alexander will be explored and the death mystery may actually be resolved. In the future study of Alexander, I believe we will look at his life as a model of leadership and the blending of myth and reality as a perfect example of how one could leave a lasting mark on society in a short time and quickly depart at the zenith of their leadership. It is in conclusion that I nominate Alexander Pavlovich Romanov for meta-human leadership status.

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36 September 15, 1932 Novoye Russkoye Slovo published “The Man Who Knew The Secret of Fyodor Kuzmich.” In the Russian Daily Newspaper. He claims to have been the son of the man who hid Alexander in the Lena Monastery in Siberia.

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