

Catherine the great continues peter the great's visions on governing policies and...

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Catherine the Great of Russia: An Absolute Monarch

Louis XIV was a dominant monarch because of his absoluteness. He ruled for a very long time and set the style for future European monarchs. Because of this a monarch's association with Louis would require a certain worthiness of the monarch. Catherine the Great certainly possesses the qualities to be associated with Louis. Catherine was suspected of murdering her husband for control of the throne. She demanded moral behavior of government officials, and Catherine also published many works stating her governmental stances. When compared with Louis XIV, she holds her ground. Catherine of Russia is worthy of membership in Louis' club due to her absoluteness shown in her governing policies, economic policies, and foreign policies.

Catherine's governing policies were similar to Louis in various ways. She, like Louis, originally tried to change her country's feudal past by eliminating serfdom. When riots and protesting broke out, she kept the traditional ways. Eventually serfdom increased more in her reign than in any other. Both monarchs ruled with central government. Catherine ruled all provinces from St. Petersburg until the " Statute of 1775" was published and called for local governments. Louis ruled from Versailles, his extensive palace, where many officials also lived.

Catherine's monarchy can also be compared to Louis' on the topic of economic policies. Both monarchs held similar policies. Catherine and Louis both ruled that nobility may be free of taxation. She announced in one of her published works, " Charters to the Nobility and Towns", that each class had to own a minimum of land to receive rights such as tax exemption and the

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right to vote. This can be compared to the fact that during Louis' reign the peasants and middle class resented the social privileges and wealth of nobles. From comparing the monarch's advancements in culture, it may be seen that Catherine, in fact, advanced more, for less of an economic inconvenience than Louis did. Catherine established 500 more grade schools during her rule. She also founded the Smolny Institution as one of the earliest Russian high schools for young females from gentry families. This was all done without the financial ruin of Russia's economy. Whereas, Louis made one major cultural advance, Versailles, and left France with a large debt. This shows that Catherine may have been even more absolute than Louis when it came to the economy.

Not only do the economic policies of the monarchs compare, but the foreign policies also show a resemblance. The biggest similarity between the two monarchs is definitely their foreign policies. Catherine earned her title, "Catherine the Great", with her successful foreign policies. She expanded Russia's southern and western borders. Catherine believed that the greater the population, the greater strength of Russia. She raised the Russian population from 20 million to people 36 million people during her reign. In Louis' case, the rulers of surrounding countries feared that he would expand into their lands so they allied together against France. However, Louis did expand France to its natural borders.

This all proves that Catherine of Russia is worthy of membership in Louis' club. Once she even said, " An extensive empire demands absolute power in the person who rules it." This quotation can be compared to Louis', " One

God, One King, One Empire.” Although her rule was much shorter than his (34 years: 72 years), they both showed strength and power. In comparison to Louis XIV, she can certainly be labeled absolute.