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## Auszug aus:

*Newspaper Article Analysis - Graham Smith: "Why UK should abolish it's failed monarchy" (June 1st, 2012)*

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## Graham Smith, "Why UK should abolish its 'failed' monarchy"

The following article appeared on CNN on June 1st 2012, during the year in which Queen Elizabeth celebrated her Diamond Jubilee, i.e. the 60th anniversary of her ascension to the throne.<sup>1</sup>

5 With all the fuss in the media at the moment about Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee anyone could be forgiven for thinking that the British are united in their adoration of their monarch. The reality is that while a large swathe of public opinion is largely indifferent to the royals -- but happy to have an extra public holiday to mark the jubilee -- many millions want the whole institution of monarchy consigned to the history books.

10 The British republican movement has been growing rapidly over the past 18 months -- thanks in large part to the heightened royal coverage prompted by last year's wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton and this year's jubilee. Our cause is simple: it's about democratic reform and a rejection of inherited power and privilege. The case for Britain becoming a republic is threefold: the monarchy is wrong in principle, in practice and it is wrong politically.

15 We're supposed to be a democratic society, which means we should cherish and value democratic values, such as equality of citizenship, freedom to participate in government, accountability and transparency. In a democratic society there is no room for a head of state who is put there for life and by birth. A hereditary monarch has no place in a society that believes "we the people" should be in charge. The principled objection is unanswerable.

20 In practice the monarchy is an institution that is not fit for purpose. It is secretive, having recently lobbied successfully to have itself removed entirely from the reaches of our Freedom of Information laws; it lobbies government ministers for improvements to its financial benefits and for its own private agenda; it is hugely costly -- an estimated £202 million a year, enough to pay for thousands of teachers, nurses or police officers at a time of sweeping public spending cuts. [...]

Politically the monarchy is wrong because -- contrary to what is believed by many here and abroad -- it is a central feature of our unwritten constitution. The "Crown" is the supreme authority in this country -- not the people. The Crown has vast powers that cannot be challenged in a court of law and those powers are exercised by the queen on the instruction of our prime minister.

25 Those powers include considerable patronage -- the ability to appoint bishops, government ministers, heads of public bodies and so on -- as well as the power to go to war, sign treaties and change the law through the little-understood Privy Council. Thanks to the Crown there is almost no limit to the power of our politicians other than those limits they place upon themselves (such as our Human Rights Act, which

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<sup>1</sup> <http://edition.cnn.com/2012/05/30/world/europe/uk-jubilee-republicans/index.html>

## Solutions

1. Summarize the main arguments given in the article about why Britain should abolish the monarchy.

Three main reasons why the monarchy in Britain should be abolished are identified by the author: The author claims that the monarchy is "wrong in principle, in practice and [...] politically" (l. 10). The author begins by explaining his claim why the monarchy is wrong in principle. He criticizes that, even though values such as equality are the core values of every democratic society, the monarch nevertheless stands above the citizens, making him or her inherently unequal. Smith claims that there is "no room for a head of state who is put there for life and by birth" in a democratic society (l. 12). Thus, monarchy is irreconcilable with the democratic society of Britain.

Smith then goes on to criticize the practice of monarchy, which he believes that "is not fit for purpose" (l. 16). He points out that the monarchy is "secretive" (l. 16), follows its "own private agenda" (l. 18) and is "hugely costly" (l. 19). Thus, Smith underlines his claim that the monarchy is not just wrong in principle, but also serves no purpose other than its own, and hence is wrong in practice.

Finally, Smith makes his most important point, that the monarchy is politically wrong. He asserts that the monarchy has powers that "cannot be challenged in a court of law" (l. 23) and that these powers are extended to the politicians almost without limit. He claims that the "pomp of monarchy" (l. 29) simply serves to distract society from this unjust division of power.

He then addresses two main arguments that defenders of the monarchy have brought forth, namely that the queen does her job of leading the country well and that tourism would suffer if the monarchy were abolished. He points out that no one can know whether the queen does her job well, as there "has never been any real scrutiny of her role" (l. 45) or of her achievements (l. 47 - 49). He discredits the second argument, saying that the history that the monarchy as created will remain an attraction for tourists even without a reigning monarch (l. 40 - 42).

Finally, Smith concludes that due to all these flaws and the fact that the monarchy "offer[s] little in return" (l. 52), the monarchy should be abolished in Britain.

2. Compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of the British monarchy with one other form of government.

The British government is a constitutional monarchy, which means that the monarch is the head of the state and the Prime Minister is the head of government. Though the monarch, Queen Elizabeth, does not often directly take part in government, she does hold several powers such as the power to declare war or the power to dissolve parliament. One advantage of the constitutional monarchy is that it actively partakes in the preservation of history and culture. Furthermore, as a monarch is not bound by the duration of political terms, the country always has the stability of one leader to represent their interests.

A disadvantage of the constitutional monarchy is, first and foremost, that the citizens of a country do not elect the monarchy. Thus, the citizens have no say in who should be the head of their state. This is, as Graham Smith points out, actually irreconcilable with democratic values. Furthermore, the monarch cannot be removed.



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