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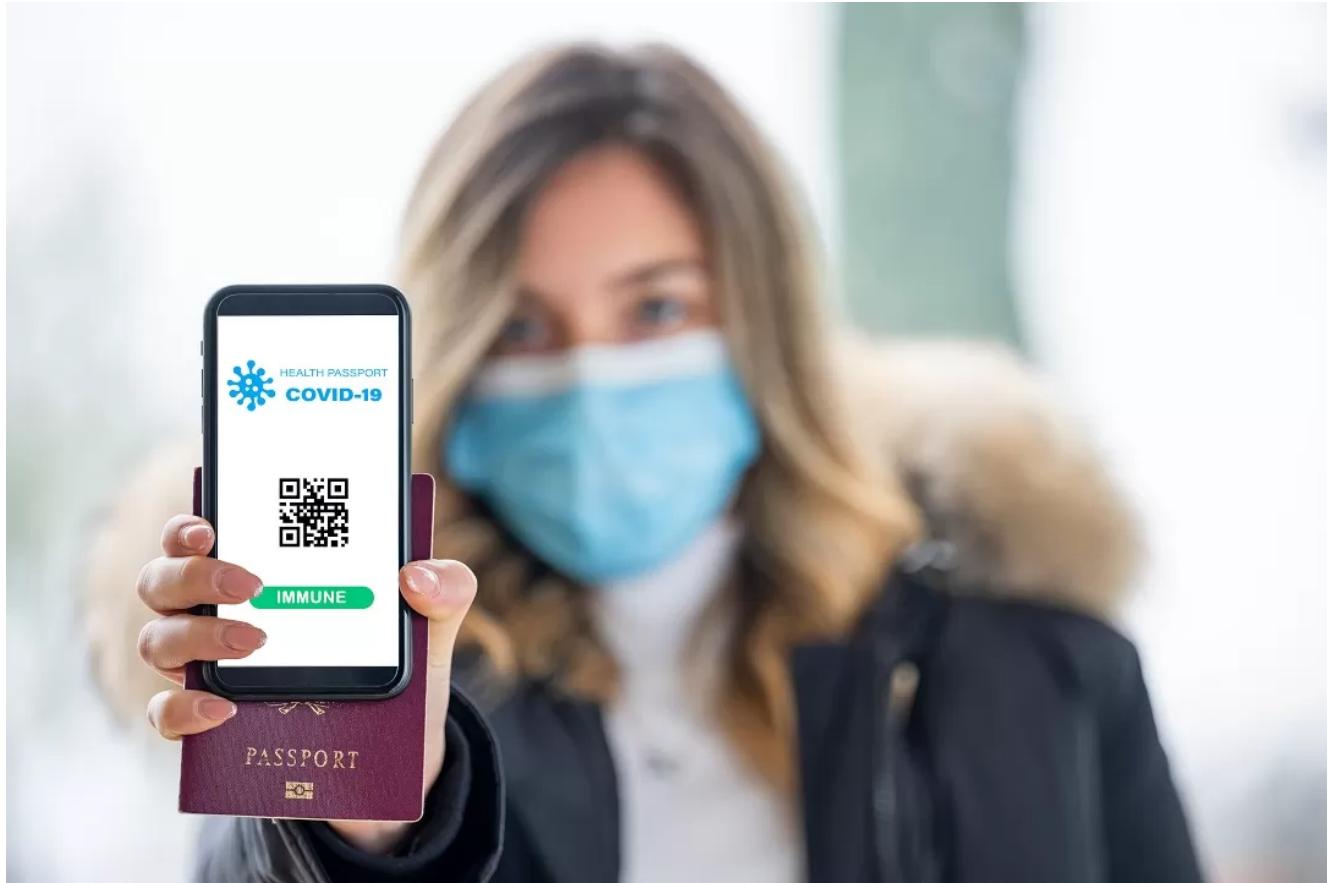


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BY LYNNE MCTAGGART
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This week, the UK Parliament voted by an overwhelming majority to renew the Coronavirus Act, giving the government wartime powers to pass laws without going through Parliament – or indeed allowing any sort of independent debate.

This doesn't seem to make sense. Cases and deaths from Covid have fallen precipitously in the UK. Some 40 percent of the UK population have now been vaccinated, about a third of the

population have been exposed to it in all forms and 80 percent don't get a bad reaction when they do get it.

There seems to be light at the end of this long, dark tunnel. You would think we were heading toward some sort of herd immunity and that it might be time to open up the country, which has been in total lockdown since before Christmas.

Nevertheless, the latest government announcement, thanks to their scientific advisers, is that it's unlikely we'll be able to travel outside the country this summer.

But this latest move by the British government – and increasingly, by governments around the world – is, to my mind, more worrying than the nastiest of nasty coronaviruses.

Although I'm using the UK as an example, largely because I live there, this is happening in countries around the world in some form or another.

Now that the UK government has a new mandate to essentially do what it likes, what's flying up the flagpole now are the ideas about vaccine passports: for entering pubs or to sports arenas or theaters, for attending business conferences and weddings, to be allowed to go to work and, of course, to be able to travel anywhere outside the country.

The same is happening in the US. As Dr. John Brownstein, an epidemiologist at Boston Children's Hospital, told ABC News: 'Whether it's school, entertainment venues or travel, there's going to be an expectation that to resume these activities you have to be retested and enter quarantine or produce proof of immunization.'

He's talking about a little paper card that the hospital or doctor gives you after you've had a shot, showing the brand of vaccine, and when and where you got it.

Even Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who once said he'd tear up any such document in front of anyone who asked to see it, has now done an about-face and has senior cabinet ministers drawing up plans.

They aren't following the science here, as they like to claim; they're following the opinion polls. The public, having been consistently scared out of their wits by the nightly display of numbers, deaths, and people gasping for breath in hospitals, now support vaccine identity cards, curfews, border closures – the lot.

This is not about whether or not the vaccine works, or the fact that this is a medicine under temporary license and still in stage 3 trials, or the more than 92,000 Yellow Card reports (the voluntary reporting system by doctors) of serious side effects thus far in the UK alone.

There is an even bigger issue at stake here – an issue concerning the very heart of our society. In a stroke, we are willingly, *gladly* suspending the very foundation of liberal democracy in the place where essentially it was born.

First of all, by agreeing that people must be coerced to carry such cards we are allowing the government to make a fundamental breach of human rights. UNESCO has a Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005), of which UK is a signatory, and according to Article 6:

'Any preventive, diagnostic and therapeutic medical intervention is only to be carried out with the prior, free and informed consent of the person concerned, based on adequate information. The consent should, where appropriate, be express and may be withdrawn by the person concerned at any time and for any reason without disadvantage or prejudice.'

What that says, in effect, is that we cannot be coerced against our will to get vaccinated, particularly when we don't have adequate information (as in, how many side effects it can have, and who is at risk, how effective is it, and so forth).

What a vaccine passport requires us to do is nothing less than give up bodily autonomy. We would be required to carry an identity card containing medical information, to be displayed more or less any time we want to gather in a public place outside our front door.

But even greater is a giant shift in the government's perception of its role. As Fraser Nelson wrote today in The Telegraph, it used to be the case that the government would have to demonstrate, beyond a reasonable doubt, that a threat was great enough to justify depriving people of basic liberties. 'Now, the burden of proof has flipped,' he writes.

The government is saying that a new variant might – just might – appear, and if it does, the vaccine *might* not be able to make it less deadly. So just in case that happens, nobody can leave the country.

This means, says Nelson, that the UK has adopted the 'precautionary principle.'

'It transforms the relationship between the individual and the state. It means all kinds of costs can be incurred – and freedoms suspended – just in case. There need be no real plausibility test, no balance of risk. In this black-box democracy, decisions are taken without transparency.'

And most worrying of all, any dissent can be squashed.

Consider this. After the HART report, the work of 51 scientists, medics, academics and public health officials criticizing the government's response to Covid, was published (and actually praised by a former Supreme Court judge), the London Times attempted to trash it, labelling it 'anti-vaxx.'

Government officials have been attacking academics like this for being against consensus policy. Even scientific advisers questioning the pro-lockdown program have been threatened with dismissal.

And last weekend, one of the largest demonstrations against lockdown policy, with what could have been up to 35,000 protesters, was broken up as 'illegal.'

If we don't have agency over our own bodies, if we don't have the right to debate, to disagree, to protest or to demand the government justify its actions, if our media has abandoned its role of holding government to account and is actually *protecting* it against any sort of criticism, then we don't have a democracy anymore.

And if we ourselves are voting for all of this in opinion polls, then we are in big trouble, my friend. And I suggest that we are more than halfway there.

Dust off your placards. We are definitely going to need you.

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Carolyn Cairns Long

Lynne please let us know when you are going to do a group healing around this social disaster

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Carolyn Cairns Long

This is against all form of human rights

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Carolyn Richards

I agree - we all need to unite (the world)..... unfortunelty that experimental drug they are using they said is going to create the virus to mutate faster and thus we are seeing new strands. They (specifically citing Pro vaccine Scientist Geerte Bossche) who wrote into the W.H.O of the mass vaccination repercussions, stated that the immune sytems wont be able to keep up with the mutations and if vaccinated only will protect from the current strand AND that the vaccine will bully the innate immune systems so it could leave vaccinated unarmed.

We need to protect ourselves....., I have always felt pro-choice on vaccines however I feel this is an uninformed for anyone to make a logical decision - I cried when I understood the possibilities of this experiment. In addition to the rush and pushing of this, our rights are being infringed upon and now is our time if we would like to keep our freedoms and help other countries truly achieve theres