

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نېاشد تن من مېباد بلین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مېباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زیانهای اروپایی

M. Mandl

12.04.2020

Coronavirus and the new exodus from Paris

The flight from contagion has echoes of the panic of 1940

Apr 9th 2020

ONE FRIEND sighted a family flinging suitcases and children's bicycles into an SUV parked at the foot of his Paris apartment building. Another reported an eerie silence on her shared stairwell as though she, and her block's elderly residents, were the only ones left behind. As rumours of imminent confinement spread, motorways jammed up with cars leaving the capital and railway stations filled with agitated passengers wheeling suitcases towards high-speed TGV trains. Many of those who could, fled: to secondary homes in the country or to parents in *la province*, before France went into lockdown on March 17th.

Such scenes and stories of flight from covid-19 have since been repeated in New York, London and other cities too, as the wealthy escape to country homes in The Hamptons or Cornwall. Amid fears of disease, crowds and contamination, it is a natural instinct to seek refuge in pure air, coast and hills. In the French mind, "towns are a place of stench, sickness and riots", said Jean Viard, a sociologist. The 19th-century bourgeoisie kept country homes as a place of refuge from urban pollution or heat. There is a scene at the start of Camus's "La Peste" ("The Plague"), a novel that has now shot up the bestseller list in France, in which Doctor Bernard Rieux prepares to send his wife, suffering from tuberculosis, to the mountains.