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Karavostasi (Gemikonagi), Cyprus

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Karavostasi (Gemikonağı), Cyprus: a village buckling under the strain of its history.

Karavostasi (Gemikonagi), Cyprus

Karavostasi was a long-mixed village, with a proud history of bicomunal labour and struggle; then it was struck by two acute waves of the Cyprus Conflict, and resource depletion, and it never recovered. Now, even the material evidence of the communities' coexistence and cooperation is breaking up and disappearing.

Karavostasi was a long-mixed village, with a proud history of bicomunal labour and struggle; then it was struck by two acute waves of the Cyprus Conflict, and resource depletion, and it never recovered. Now, even the material evidence of the communities' coexistence and cooperation is breaking up and disappearing.

Its original, Greek-language name means “boat stop”, “mooring point for ships”, ‘anchorage for sailing vessels’; its alternative, Turkish-language name, *Gemikonağı*, is a direct translation. In 55 years, the settlement grew from a hamlet of fishers, into a port for citrus export, into a centre for mineral processing, which was more than 80 times its original size.

Then Greek Cypriot paramilitaries forced out its Turkish Cypriot villagers in 1963 and 1964; the copper began to peter out in 1970 (Feridun, 2000: 115); and Turkish soldiers drove out its Greek Cypriot villagers in 1974. The community, which had pulled in workers from across the island, was cast out across the island. The village shrank to a sixth of its peak size, re-inhabited by Turkish Cypriot families who had left a decade earlier, and by new Turkish Cypriot refugees.

In a process that encompasses the conflict, cultural decay/destruction and organised crime, some of the abandoned buildings have been converted into sites of sex slavery.

Feridun, F K. 2000: “Lefke kasabası'nın tarihsel boyutunda bir kesit: Kıbrıs Maden Şirketi (Cyprus Mines Corporation – CMC) ve bugünkü demografik yapı [A cross-section of Lefke town's historical dimensions: the Cyprus Mines Corporation (CMC – Kıbrıs Maden Şirketi) and today's demographic structure]”. *Journal of Cyprus Studies*, Number 16/17, 111-124.

