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Masks of Demons: A Journey into the Discovering and Breaking of Stereotypes in a Society

Yiannis Laouris
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In *Masks of Demons* Yiannis Laouris has written an account of his transformation from a doctor, scientist, and entrepreneur on Cyprus to an active participant in the effort to establish peace between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots and reunite the divided island nation. While his peace making efforts were not always successful, Laouris' journey makes fascinating reading. He writes: "When I started this book, I was hoping to find answers. Instead, I ended up with more questions."

Laouris has an inquisitive mind, which he has diligently applied to becoming an extraordinarily sophisticated and well-educated person. He studied medicine at the University of Leipzig and earned a doctorate in neuro-physiology at the Karl-Ludwig Institute in Leipzig. In addition, Laouris holds a masters degree in systems and industrial engineering from the University of Arizona. He has conducted experimental research into brain function and has delivered papers at numerous international conferences. *Masks of Demons* details his efforts at applying "interactive management," a methodology of dialogue, to both conflict resolution and peace making.

Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974. A war was fought on the island between Cypriot nationals, Greek forces, and the Turkish army. The violence resulted in the partition of Cyprus into Turkish and Greek enclaves. For nearly twenty years, little or no communication was allowed between the two areas. In 1993, Laouris, along with others, began the arduous task of establishing conflict-resolution workshops attended by Greek and Turkish Cypriots. Their first task was to build "a methodology that would enable the collective wisdom of people from all walks of life to be harnessed," he writes. The gatherings labored to establish an environment that promoted creativity and trust.

The training workshops eventually resulted in action. Bi-communal meetings were allowed to be held. Ultimately, Greek Cypriots were permitted to visit the northern Turkish areas and the Turks were allowed to visit in the south. Although these efforts at peace making never resulted in eradicating all of the tensions between the two groups, animosities have been reduced and communications have been established.

Reading *Masks of Demons* is akin to spending an evening with the author in a free-flowing discussion. While describing his experiences at conflict resolution, Laouris also includes a brief history of the island of Cyprus, including references to the birthplace of the goddess Aphrodite and the mansion of Dionysus, the god of wine. He quotes Socrates: "The more I learn, the more I realize how little I know." And Pink Floyd: "Momma's gonna make all of your nightmares come true…Mother, did it need to be so high."

Masks of Demons is an enticing introduction into the mind and life of an urbane man dedicated to making a more just and peaceful world. Reading about Laouris' journey should encourage others to make a similar commitment.
JOHN MICHAEL SENGER (August 2, 2011)

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