



## VACATION FROM HISTORY: ETHNIC CLEANSING AS THE CLUB MED EXPERIENCE

PETER LAGERQUIST

*When Club Med arrived in Israel in 1961, it found on the country's northern coast a golden beach with picturesque ruins and no people—the kind of place where a weary European could “feel so far away, yet be so near.” Palestinians who once lived in the coastal village of al-Zib feel the same way. Driven from their homes in 1948, some returned to the vicinity of their destroyed village after the war, to resettle on the margins of Israel's conscience and the globalized fantasies of leisure that have since been enacted on the ruins of their homes.*

IN 1950, VACATION PIONEER CLUB MED began marketing a fantasy of European middle class escape that has since turned the company into an international leisure empire with two billion dollars in annual revenues and has become a template for much of the global North–South tourist industry. As the sahibs let loose and let go in the tropics, this conceit is not coincidentally colonial. The jungle is conveniently domesticated, however, because the Club Med experience is exotic but not uncomfortably so: a world where the natives can be called forth as dancing spectacle or cheap help but are neither seen nor heard if they are not wanted. And mostly, they are not wanted. Club Med's enclaved beaches and mountain resorts are supposed to be an antidote to civilization—places where one can “get away from it all.” The modern vacation dream, in other words, needs spaces that are depopulated. In some places, there are national dreams like that.

### WELCOME TO PARADISE

A cluster of limestone houses climbs from the surf and up a wind-swept promontory framed by palm fronds, statuesquely wrought cacti, and spumes of flowers. The view from the crest is quietly spectacular, taking in a mile long sand beach curving southwards along Israel's north Mediterranean coast, backset by the verdant mountains of Lebanon. The rest of the hill is covered by a fenced-off national park centered on the remains of a Crusader fortress. On this side of the fence, nestled at the foot of the hill, lies a pool and sports

---

PETER LAGERQUIST, a writer and journalist based in Israel and the West Bank. An earlier, shorter version of this essay appeared in the German edition of *Le Monde Diplomatique* in January 2006.

complex trailed by a line of straw huts, catamarans and sailing boats beached by the water's edge, flags and banners fluttering over a dozen empty sun chairs and overturned beach furniture. The breeze carries fragments of laughter from the pool—sounds of the late cleaning crew—but otherwise the silence is complete, the place a ghost village. It is 15 May 2005 and Israelis are still recovering from the Independence Day celebrations that had four days earlier launched the summer's first long weekend. Another kind of silence hangs over the houses on the bluff. Today is Nakba ("Catastrophe") Day, when Palestinians commemorate the underside of Israel's coming into being in 1948—the emptying of some 450 villages, hamlets, and towns in what was then largely Arab Palestine. Anywhere else, this kind of silence might weigh heavily. Here it's the sound of getting away from it all. "Welcome to Club Arziv," says the sign at the entrance.

The hill whose name is today transliterated from the Hebrew as Arziv, Achziv, or Akhziv lies ten kilometers north of the historic Arab port city of Acre (Akko in Hebrew). The village was originally a Canaanite settlement prophetically named Akzib, meaning "trickster." In chronicles by Arab geographers in 1182–84 and 1228, it is described as a large village on the Levantine coast. Until 1948, it was known as al-Zib and was home to some two thousand Palestinian fishing and farming families, whose orchards, fields, and plantations covered over five square miles.<sup>1</sup> That was the last time they, or the name al-Zib, were heard of by most Israelis. The line today recited by Israel's Tourist Ministry is that they "left for Lebanon" during the country's War of Independence, trailing some 750,000 other people—some 60 percent of Palestine's Arab population—into exile. According to the official *History of the Haganah*—the proto-army of Palestine's prestate Jewish settler community—"The inhabitants fled at the appearance of Jewish forces." This ethereal narrative is also echoed in contemporary tourist guides and leisure glossies, from *Frommer's* to *Go World Travel Magazine*.

Israeli historian Benny Morris tells a grittier story, tracing through military archives the progress of a 1948 Haganah area offensive codenamed Operation Ben Ami. Executed between 13 and 22 May by the Haganah's Carmeli Brigade, "[its] orders specifically called for the conquest and demolition of the main targeted villages, al Bassa, al Zib, and al Sumeiriya."<sup>2</sup> "Villagers later complained that upon capturing Bassa, the Haganah had executed a handful of youngsters and there (as in Sumeriyia and Zib) had molested or violated a number of women"<sup>3</sup>; at least one young woman was gang-raped, one former Carmeli commander confirmed.<sup>4</sup> In the nearby village of Kabri, attacked as part of the same operation, "a number of villagers were apparently executed by the troops." The commander "wanted both to punish the villagers, especially of Zib and Kabri, for past misdemeanors, and to make sure they would never return," wrote an observer accompanying the troops.<sup>5</sup>

The villagers scattered, but not all as far as Lebanon. Many fled to nearby Arab villages and towns, including Acre and Nazareth, and tried from there to stage a return as soon as the fighting ended. Israeli military patrols established to prevent just such an eventuality made sure that al-Zib and scores of similarly

vacated villages remained that way. Only one family was allowed to stay on to look after the property.<sup>6</sup> In 1949, a socialist collective—Kibbutz Geshet Haziv—populated by new immigrants from England, the United States, and South Africa was established on the lands of al-Zib. These utopians complained to the government that the family might become the nucleus of a rejuvenated native community, and so “eventually, the inhabitants were cleared out and the village was razed.”<sup>7</sup> Only a few fully intact structures remained—the mosque, the *mukhtar*’s residence, and a few outlying houses—amid a mass of ruins picturesquely scattered over the bluff.

Today advertising itself as Israel’s largest turkey breeder, Haziv was also one of the first kibbutzim to begin selling off its land for private real estate development. Just north of it, up the road from the Club Med, there is a monument today to fourteen Jewish fighters who were killed by British troops in June 1946 as they were lacing bombs under a nearby bridge. The monument still draws occasional crowds and gets a mention in many tourist guides. Not all contemporary tragedies were so commemorated, however.

### STAGING THE DREAM

Expanding rapidly across the Mediterranean in the late 1950s, Club Med was speeded to Israel by a direct invitation from its first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion. The invitation was instigated by Israel’s new Ministry of Tourism, which was then part of the prime minister’s office and headed by a man named Teddy Kollek, who later went on to become the mayor of Jerusalem following the city’s complete conquest by Israel in the June 1967 War. For the Israeli government, the Club Med venture marked a breakthrough. After the 1948 war, the Arab League had launched a boycott of Israel’s economy and companies that dealt with it. Major internationals had been wary of investing, and the arrival of a major European conglomerate was seen as a major boost to the fledgling Israel, Inc.

The founders of Club Med were keen to help. A Belgian diamond cutter named Gerard Blitz had established the first Club Med village in 1950 in Mallorca, on Spain’s Sun Coast. A one-time Olympic swimmer, he soon partnered with a flamboyant entrepreneur named Gilbert Trigano, who had in earlier incarnations been a drama critic, journalist, and French Resistance fighter during the German occupation. As a former professional actor, Trigano also had a flair for the theatrical. Together, the two followed Israel’s rise out of the ashes of the Holocaust. “They were both Jews and wanted to help Israel,” says Ze’ev Dahan, the current General Manager of Club Med Israel and author of a Trigano biography. “Trigano was friendly with Ben-Gurion, and in 1960 set up an Israeli Club Med representative office. Always,” Dahan says, “Mr. Trigano worked to promote tourism in Israel.”<sup>8</sup>

The Galilee’s rolling pastorals had been largely cleared of their native Arab population during the 1948 war. Subject to a rash of land confiscations, the remainder lived under martial law for the next two decades, when the region

remained a thinly populated backwater dotted by Jewish settlements devoted mostly to agriculture on newly expropriated lands. In 1961, the government bestowed on Club Med title over part of the beautifully situated and lyrically empty slice of coast now known as Arziv. The contract took the form of a fifty-year lease from the Israeli Lands Administration, which is the custodian of all Israeli national lands, including seized 1948 refugee properties. As a special favor, the government allowed that the beach would be the only one in Israel not open to the general public, circumventing prevailing law. "They made an exception for us," says Dahan.<sup>9</sup>

For Club Med, its new fiefdom was an idyll waiting to be redreamed. The company commissioned a prestigious Israeli architectural firm to help transform it into the kind of indeterminably exotic space marketed by its promotional brochures. The firm's work was overseen by Zvi Hecker, a talented Polish immigrant and Holocaust survivor who arrived in Israel two years after its establishment. He designed and supervised the construction of a collection of straw bungalows, then seen as an innovative variation on the faux-Polynesian beach huts that are still Club Med's signature prop. The area around the resort's main leisure complex was landscaped and is today a rambling tableau of palm trees and lush lawns quaintly ornamented with cracked amphoras and mill stones. A cluster of demolished houses on the bluff was rebuilt separately by Club Med so as to retain its charmingly ruined patina and remarketed as a mystical theme park "Arabian Village." Originally serving in part as staff accommodations, the houses also came to provide the setting for a rustic sea view restaurant and bar/lounge. Advertised as possessing the only private beachfront in Israel, Club Med proudly called this "our village."

Arziv opened with fanfare in 1962 and became the pride of Club Med's global village archipelago, topping customer approval ratings for six years running. "The village was one of [Club Med's] best villages around the world," reaffirms Dahan. From the beginning, Club Med pushed Arziv's "fun, cosmopolitan atmosphere," but Dahan is proud to highlight that in contrast to the endless amenities on offer today, the secret of Arziv's success was always its unaffected charm. There were few activities on offer when it first opened, he says. "In 1960s and '70s, it was only volleyball. The pool was built in the early '90s."<sup>10</sup> Yet the guests came; during the club's heyday in the 1980s, 14,000 people every five-month season.

Most of these guests were Israelis. During a time when the young state's Jewish working class did not have the means to travel abroad, Arziv offered a rare taste of cosmopolitanism. As people from varied backgrounds came to meet on its beaches, the resort became a space for new encounters and adventurous beginnings. "Everybody had a first love in Arziv or met their husband in Arziv," enthuses Club Med Israel's current marketing manager, Sabine Sitruk. "It's the same when I talk to people who are 30 years old or 65 years old. It is like Arziv was the Genesis."<sup>11</sup>

Only a few Israelis dwelt on their Original Sin. After completing this—his first—commission, Zvi Hecker went on to make a name for himself as an

architect of scorched memory, designing museums and testimonies to Jewish life in Europe. Today he is counted among Israel's foremost architects and was in 2001 invited along with five other architects to submit a proposal for the Berlin Holocaust Memorial. These days Hecker spends much of the year in his Berlin office; a soft spoken voice on the line from Germany, he still recalls his work in al-Zib with deeply mixed feelings, emphasizing that his own commission was a limited one.

"By Club Med we were asked to provide a space for a kind of cheap accommodation, which was in that time done in straw material," he says. "We did not work on the village: the Arab village was there. It was an Arab village that was left by the Arabs who fled or were driven out by the army." Hecker is grateful, he says, that, four decades later, the huts he built have fallen apart and been replaced by others. "Our design was consumed by sun and rain, leaving no traces of any landscape intervention, which can't be said about Jewish settlements in the West Bank." Few Israeli then thought much about that history, he continues. "I must say that at the time, it was a kind of taboo. It was not really in our conscience. The Holocaust was also a kind of taboo then," he adds. "But at that time I was not as conscious as I should have been."<sup>12</sup>

#### FANTASIES OF POSSESSION

Unencumbered by people and history, consciousness, like Club Med's fantasies, had a way of taking flight in al-Zib. In 1952, an Iranian-born sailor named Eli Avivi arrived in the area and found houses without people, for a person without a house. A few years later, he "moved in," as he put it, taking up residence on the northernmost edge of the old village center, just next to the Club Med. Running battles with officialdom ensued. Though the courts did not have the heart to evict him, the government finally took matters into its own hands in 1970 and sent bulldozers to flatten the house where he had been living. Avivi retaliated by declaring the Independent State of Akhzivland on his own slice of the bluff. In this personal kingdom he set up a hostel and a makeshift museum, located inside the renovated *mukhtar's* house, where visitors can still get their passports stamped on entry. In a short time, Akhzivland became a countercultural Mecca, hosting a steady stream of artists, writers, and vaguely oppositional types.

Avivi likes visitors. Now in his seventies, he says he keeps in touch with families from the village, who occasionally come to see their land. One of them now lives in Acre, he says, and he professes to feel sympathy for them. "Look, it's politics. In the future, if there is an agreement and they come back, it's okay with me," he says. "I'm not a political man. I didn't make the war, I just live here."<sup>13</sup> And politics do feel remote in Akhziv: for most people, the past has a way of dissipating in the ocean breeze, the late Mediterranean light bathing the hard edges of things in a soft, inviting glow. "All are welcome in Akhzivland," reads an online photograph caption in *Go World Travel Magazine*.<sup>14</sup> As in Club Med, however, that's not quite true.

Kamil Sa'adi's family of fishermen owned the house that became Avivi's and he nuances the account of how the Iranian "moved in." "He broke in," says Kamil bluntly. "What to say? I was born in Akko. My father and my brothers were born in al-Zib, not 'Akhziv'! In 1948 the Israelis kicked us from our houses, our village, and took our land." After the war, he says, the family took on Avivi as help, and a friendship formed that lasted until 1955, when he took over their house. "He was a friend of my father and brother and was working with them. No one thought about it, that it would belong to him."<sup>15</sup>

Today, the Sa'adi family lives in the walled and neglected Arab kasbah of Acre, a few minutes drive from the site of their village. The road runs through Acre's New Town, whose central avenue was renamed "Ben Ami Street" in honor of the Haganah offensive that cleared the area of Palestinians in 1948. Now it cuts through a blight of 1960s-era block housing populated by working class Middle Eastern, African, and Russian immigrants who move out as soon as they can afford to and are accordingly being increasingly replaced by local Palestinian families seeking an escape from the dilapidated kasbah ghetto.

To get his land back, Kamil says that he went to Israeli courts with title deeds issued under the British Mandate, but with no luck. "The law of this country is a bit funny: if you manage to break in, after 24 hours or 48 hours only by law can you be evicted. It's not fair," he continues. "Avivi is not from al-Zib, and he became the owner by force, like all such things in this country."<sup>16</sup> Kamil kept on fighting for two decades in the teeth of ceaseless dismissals. He faced one insurmountable problem: though the Sa'adis became citizens of the new state of Israel, they were not sufficiently present in the imagination of that state. One of Israel's first pieces of national legislation, the 1950 Absentee Property Law, expropriated both the properties of refugees had who left the country (absentees) and of those who lingered on the outskirts of their emptied villages, waiting in vain to return. These persons were termed "Present Absentees," and in no instance have any of them managed to recover their properties. So designated, the Sa'adis and their neighbors from al-Zib were also transmuted into perfect Club Med natives: people who are there, but not inconveniently so.

### PARADISE LOST

A stocky, reticent fishmonger with parchment skin, Kamil's oldest brother Hussam was ten when the family was forced from al-Zib. "Everyone was saying, we'll go for a couple of days to Lebanon and come back," he recounts. "We went across the border to Tyre. It was a half hour's drive from al-Zib. After the war they started to build the camps in Lebanon."<sup>17</sup> His father used to swim across the border, braving the churning surf around the northern cliffs. At some point in the postwar years, he rescued an Israeli airman who had plunged into the sea, says Hussam. In return, the immediate family was allowed to return. They settled for some time in the Palestinian village of al-Mazra'a, between al-Zib and Acre. For a few months in the 1960s, Hussam worked for the Club Med, ferrying resort guests in his fishing boat to two small islands just off the coast

where the Club ran a snorkeling and scuba diving attraction. But the money was lousy, and Hussam soon quit. “The fishing paid better,” he recalls.

In the early 1970s, a seafront national park with picnic tables was erected over al-Zib, sandwiched between Akhzivland and Club Med’s resort, which was shorn of a few acres in the bargain. Today the park is a space of smoothly undulating lawns and sprinklers and the wide open sea climbing into view as one wanders up the hill. At its apex perches the village mosque, now shuttered and derelict. It is flanked by the park’s signature postcard motif: a towering four-post construction that was once, according to the park guide, a Crusader battlement. Relatives of the Sa’adis insist it was once also part of a home. The retaining walls of a handful of old houses stand like frozen surrealist sculptures in the manicured grounds: gaping windows framing blank sky, a stairway climbing to nowhere.

There was a time when Sa’adi family members were allowed free entry to the park, as a special allowance. Now they have to pay like everyone else: 20 New Israeli Shekels (about 5 dollars) per admission. By the entrance booth, informational signs in English and Hebrew narrate the history of the village since the Bronze Age. “Achziv, on the Mediterranean coast north of Haifa, is Achzib of the Bible. Mentioned in Joshua (19:29) and Judges (1:31) . . . During the period of the Second Temple and right into Talmudic times it had a flourishing Jewish community. The Crusaders built the castle L’Ambert.” The village’s thousand years of Arab history are elided in a single line: “In later times it declined into a coastal village.” Unlike the Hebrew sign, which notes that the area was conquered during the 1948 war, the English text is not weighed down by mention of conflict.

---

*The village’s thousand years of Arab history are elided in a single line: “In later times it declined into a coastal village.”*

---

Not everyone has forgotten, however. “Al-Zib was the bride of the Galilee,” recounts Kamil’s cousin Amni Sa’adi, slowly. “There was no more beautiful village. We had everything there: apples, figs, olives, orange plantations . . . our lands stretched all the way to Tarshiha.” She was not quite twenty when she fled her home. Her son reads the exact birth date off her Israeli ID: 1929—“I don’t read Hebrew,” she says. Now a finely wrinkled grandmother, she lives with her son’s family in Acre, sharing a subdivided and crumbling Ottoman merchant’s house with twenty-foot ceilings and narrow rooms, where sepia-toned photographs and sea views scroll along the walls. “Don’t ask how many were killed,” she recalls. “They came at night and destroyed the houses, and whoever was inside died. . . . My father was killed. He was defending the village. They threw a grenade into the room, and then shot him. There were people who left with just the clothes on their backs. They went to Nazareth, to Arrabi, to Sakhnin, to Kabul, to Tamra, some to Jenin. But most went to Lebanon.” So did what was left of her family—“I got married in Lebanon,” she says—before joining the trickle of illicit returnees. “When we came back, it was all destroyed. It was after 5–6 years. There is nothing there now. . . . My brothers are in Kuwait and America.”<sup>18</sup>

The scenes play like a loop in her head, her son filling in gaps in the stories he was raised on, pausing sometimes to shake his head—“she didn’t tell me this before.” And she continues: “When you walked out of the village, there was fruit on one side, and fruit on the other. There was everything that the heart needed. There is nothing like it in the world now.” She sighs. “The title papers are there in the court house, here in Acre.”<sup>19</sup> Sometimes the family goes to visit al-Zib, says her son, wandering among the eucalyptus groves, across the abandoned railroad tracks—now overgrown with weeds—which still lead north, into their alternate exile.

Letters could no longer cross the Lebanese border after 1948, but through overseas relatives the Sa’adis were able to maintain contact with their kin. Some married and settled in Tyre and Sidon. Others used to live in the Tel al-Za’tar refugee camp in East Beirut, of which nothing remains after the Lebanese Civil War. In August 1976, the camp was with Israeli support and Syrian acquiescence besieged for fifty-five days by the Christian Phalange militia. Thousands were killed and their houses obliterated. A decade later, Hussam’s branch of the family finally lost touch with their relatives.

#### AN “ORIENTAL” TOUCH

There was a time when a history of sorts used to blow back across the northern border. Until Israel withdrew in 2000 from its self-styled security zone in south Lebanon, Katyusha rockets would periodically rain down on the area. In June 1995, more than a dozen shells fired by Hizballah struck the Club Med. One French Israeli employee was killed and eight others wounded. It became difficult to woo foreign tourists, at a time when Club Med was already rethinking the future of the resort. The company had by then started to gentrify rustic resorts originally designed for package tourists, in order to lure more lucrative, upscale vacationers. In the early 2000s, it decided to scrap the mass market altogether and cut its global number of villages by half. Al-Zib was temporarily closed in 2002, though Club Med kept the land and the facilities while reassessing the Israeli market. In 2004, it leased the resort to an Israeli firm for one season, allowing it to operate the facilities under a different name.

Mindful that some history is too good a franchise to give up, the new management discretely patched over the “Med” gold serif on the marble gate sign and in 2005 put out word: “the legendary Club Arziv has reopened and invites you to unforgettable vacations!” The promotional internet gloss, still in French, promised “a private beach, permanent activities for children, sport activities on water and land, tennis courts, basketball courts, an outdoor gym, an air-conditioned indoor gym, therapy center and massage, salsa evenings, a discotheque, cocktail bars on the ocean or the beach, a Bedouin tent on the beach, and meditation and relaxation séances.”

New arrivals were greeted by a lithe and bouncy eighteen-year-old named David Smedja. David is a second-generation French Tunisian Jew and a

first-order beach hipster, sporting a deep all-body tan under his tank top, a jaunty baseball cap, and a twinkling rhinestone stud in his lower lip. Officially he's one of the club's dedicated "animators," tasked with stimulating fun and simulating congeniality on the premises. There is nothing insincere about his enthusiasm, however. He was once a guest here himself and came back, he says, because he "liked it so much."<sup>20</sup>

In addition to welcoming and orienting incoming guests, David puts on shows for their children and organizes entertainments, sports activities, and pool games. Nearly all the clients are Israelis coming to spend a few days. "On the weekends we have lots and lots of people," he says.<sup>21</sup> This afternoon they are gearing up for an end of summer graduation party: a local high school has rented the facilities for an all night rave. To keep guests entertained, the resort offers a carnival of diversions: an open air gym and a children's playground with plastic slides, a shopping arcade, and a stage with a small amphitheatre and sound proofed DJ booth for open air discos and pop concerts.

Touring the grounds, we come upon two young Palestinian-Israelis from Acre in drab and dusty work clothes. They do the cleaning and grounds maintenance and smile furtively when greeted in Arabic. They're reluctant to be interviewed or photographed, however. Glancing often over their shoulders to see if the management is watching, they soon melt politely back into the background of straw huts and carefully cultivated undergrowth. Occupying a more relaxed rung on the local corporate ladder, burnished animators, masseurs, and bartenders lounge at the pool side, savoring the rare lack of crowds and the silent, uncluttered space.

I ask David if he knows what was here before the club was built. "There was a forest here," he says. "We have a picture in the office and you see that before it was a forest." He leads the way to the club's maintenance office. Framed square over the main desk is an aerial color photograph of the al-Zib coast taken a few years after the 1948 war, after the bulldozers departed. And he's right: from this angle nothing can be seen but trees and sand. David beams benignly at my confusion. Many people are taken in by the "village" illusion, he tells me, it's a source of amusement for him every time new guests arrive. "The first thing they think is that it's a very old place," he chuckles. "People feel it's real: that it's been there since Roman times. But no! It's new!" He elaborates: "It's like an 'Arabic' village. But it's not an Arabic village. It's like an 'Oriental' village. It gives an 'Oriental' touch. I think it's a very nice thing. There is a discotheque and you have a wonderful view," he enthuses.<sup>22</sup> We contemplate the illusory houses. On one of the rustic patios, the club operates an open-air massage and relaxation center with views of the sea. A banner has been strung overhead on which the word "therapy" has been spelled out in gently wafting lettering.

#### **FOREVER ON VACATION**

In late 2005, Club Med announced that Arziv would be reopened in 2007, following a complete rebuilding of the resort. When interviewed in 2006,

company spokespeople were unsure as to whether this deadline will be met, noting that the renovation work had not yet started. They do believe there is demand, however. The company currently operates a perennially full-booked resort in Eilat, on Israel's Red Sea coast, and its success has been encouraging, noted Dahan earlier in the year. As he also emphasized, however, there is more than money at stake in Arziv. "I speak to Israelis, and they always talk about Arziv with tears," he says.<sup>23</sup> "For the Israelis, sentimentally it is so important that it would be a shame if we didn't open it again," echoes his marketing manager Sabine Sitruk. Steeped in happy memories, the resort is a promoter's dream, and in her mind she's already sketching out the relaunch campaign. "As a marketing manager I would ask people to tell their personal stories of Arziv," she muses.<sup>24</sup>

Neither of them have ever had any contact with former residents of the old village, nor have they considered their claims to the site. Dahan is gently taken aback by the idea: "It's not our property," he protests. "It's the property of the government. We can't decide."<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, Club Med, which is currently holding discussions with the Israeli government to extend its lease beyond 2012, does not feel there is anything inappropriate about its presence in al-Zib. The company has been here for more than forty years now. Live someplace long enough, and you start to believe you have the right to be there. The people of al-Zib were not the only ones to make that mistake in 1948. "The whole of Israel is built on Arab land," reflects architect Zvi Hecker. "We Israelis, really, we complain about what was done to us, but we never accept the fact that we have done so much injustice to other people. Now we have more information about what happened. We should do something about this injustice, but unfortunately we do nothing about it. In fact, we continue to make it worse."<sup>26</sup>

In al-Zib, the season came to a customary close in 2005 and once again emptied, the houses on the bluff held their silence throughout 2006. Though Kibbutz Geshet Haziv was hit by a Hizballah rocket during Israel's bloody summer war with Lebanon, the resort was not touched. There, as in the alleys of the Acre ghetto, the feeling still lingers, "to feel so far away, while being so near"—so close that you can still almost touch it. In leisure wonderland, some vacations are forever.

## NOTES

1. According to statistics of the Mandate government, al-Zib owned 12,600 dunams (3,150 acres), of which 3,000 dunams were planted in citrus and bananas, another 4,500 planted in grains, and 2,000 in orchards and irrigated crops. See Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), pp. 35-37.

2. Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 252.

3. Morris, *Birth*, p. 253

4. Dov Yirmia, "Letter to the Editor," *Ha'Aretz*, 18 December 2003. In the letter, Yirmia, a former commander with the Carmeli Brigade, recounts wartime confessions by members of the brigade.

5. Morris, *Birth*, pp. 253-54.

6. Morris, *Birth*, p. 515.

7. Morris, *Birth*, p. 515.

8. Author interview, autumn 2005.
9. Author interview, autumn 2005.
10. Author interview, autumn 2005.
11. Author interview, autumn 2005.
12. Author interview, autumn 2005.
13. Author interview, summer 2005.
14. Colin Miller, "A World of His Own: Former Seafarer Eli Avivi Rules His Own Kingdom," *Go World Travel Magazine*, [www.goworldtravel.com](http://www.goworldtravel.com).
15. Author interview, summer 2005.
16. Author interview, summer 2005.
17. Author interview, summer 2005.
18. Author interview, summer 2005.
19. Author interview, summer 2005.
20. Author interview, summer 2005.
21. Author interview, summer 2005.
22. Author interview, summer 2005.
23. Author interview, autumn 2005.
24. Author interview, autumn 2005.
25. Author interview, autumn 2005.
26. Author interview, autumn 2005.



The reconstructed ruins of al-Zib that make up Club Med's "Arabian Village" can be seen among the foliage behind the resort's swimming pool. (Peter Lagerquist)