Introduction

In 2014, the Israeli Government announced the establishment of a new ‘Arab City’ – the city of Tantour. Conceived as a solution for housing shortage in the country’s ‘Arab sector’, the new urban development is planned to increase housing supply in the Galilee region, where the majority of Palestinian Citizens of Israel (PCI) live. By applying a settler-colonial approach to urbanisation processes in Israel/Palestine, a complex reality of ethnicised spatialisation emerges as the context of this supposed shift in the state’s approach towards its non-Jewish citizens, whereby territorialised construction of Jewish national identity simultaneously includes and excludes ‘others’ (Tzfadia and Yacobi 2011: 90). Specifically, the capitalist production of the nation-state in Israel/Palestine has been analysed as an ‘ethnocratic’ regime (Yiftachel 2006): ethno-national ideology articulated through an ethnic logic of capital, which produces a spatialised ethno-class system. In other words, the Zionist colonisation of Israel/Palestine as a whole follows an ethnic logic of space. This has been referred to as ‘Judaisation of space’: the pledge to settle a Jewish majority in Palestine while negating local Palestinian identity and its presence on the landscape (Jabareen 2014a; Peled and Shafir 2002; Tzfadia and Yacobi 2011; Yiftachel 2009).

While researching new cities in Israel and Palestine, in 2016 I interviewed local activists, academics, planners and politicians involved in the project of Tantour. It outlines resistance to the ‘Arab City’ as a determinedly anti-colonial struggle for de-colonisation of space. The local opposition to urban development elucidates how urban ethnocracy creates a neo-liberal battleground where the right to the city – as a political class struggle to de-colonise everyday life – may be threatened by the state’s de-politicisation attempts and thus integrated as strategy for overcoming inherent contradictions in the production of space. In light of recent assertions about total global urbanisation (such as ‘planetary urbanisation’), the meaning of the right to the city may become idle. However, urbanisation always produces new possibilities for resistance. Yet, as Lefebvre argued, anti-capitalist struggle for de-colonisation must be part of a broader social revolution (1991: 228). Considering ‘colonisation’ in a neo-colonial context, the struggle against Tantour certainly proves the right to the city is very much alive but only insofar as it suggests an alternative ideology to state-led urbanism; in this case, as an anti-colonial struggle against the ethnocratic regime.
The ‘Arab City’ in Israel: a new fact of colonial urbanism

In De l’État (1976–1978), Lefebvre explains that political regimes enable capitalism to overcome its inner contradictions through the production of space. Using the concept ‘state mode of production’, he describes specific strategies through which the state produces itself and its space simultaneously. These include the production of ‘national territory’: a concrete abstraction of the hierarchal order of state institutions and laws, state-imposed division of labour and uneven development (on all scales) that is intrinsic to capitalism (Lefebvre 2009 [1978]: 224). Producing the spaces of capitalism, such as housing estates and suburban enclaves, the state is thus at the core of Lefebvre’s spatialisation of Marx’s Capital (Lefebvre 2009 [1979]: 186). Indeed, Jessop (2008) reminds us that economic elements (e.g. national currency, taxation, mortgages) are always political and therefore the capitalist mode of production cannot be analysed without the (extra-economic) politics of the capitalist state (164). Moreover, the state creates a spatial power matrix, spatially selective interventions for maintaining control and countering resistance (Brenner and Elden 2009: 359). It is then impossible to interpret Lefebvre’s right to the city (RTC) without considering the specific ideology with and against which space is produced. In the settler-colonial state, the spatial power matrix seeks to homogenise nation with territory (Poulantzas 2003: 74). And in Israel/Palestine, neo-liberal urbanisation is reproducing colonial relations of domination (Hanieh 2013). Hence ‘Judaisation of space’ is the spatial power matrix of a continuous colonial project.

It is worth highlighting two principles in Zionist ideology from the pre-state period that are still influential in Judaisation of space today; both were instrumental for the vision of creating a new, modern Jewish society in Palestine, by rejecting European bourgeois culture as well as Oriental past and present. First, the ‘conquest of labour’ was originally about annexing all local jobs to Jews, thus creating a nationalist Jewish working class (Nitzan and Bichler 2002). Second, ‘conquest of land’ meant working the land and settling the land in order to redeem it from Palestinian-Arab peasants who were perceived as primitive and reconnect the Jewish people with their historic landscape (Peled and Shafir 2002: 113). In the British Mandate period (1920–1947), the control and management of land in Palestine was necessary for incorporating it in the Empire’s economy, as in other colonies (Goswami 2004: 56). When British officials facilitated the sale of peasants’ lands to Jewish settlers, Palestinian-Arabs were made further vulnerable to dispossession (Kimmerling 1983: 38). The conquest of labour and conquest of land thus prevented an Arab-Jewish working-class alliance in Palestine. After the Palestinian Nakba – and the founding of the state of Israel – in 1948, this political economy generated an ethnically demarcated national market with a spatialised ‘Arab sector’. Palestinian-Arab labour has been since partially excluded from the national market by being marginalised into confined spaces and specific occupations in Israeli economy (Hever 2012; Nitzan and Bichler 2002; Peled and Shafir 2002). At the same time, PCI have been marginalised in the national territory: in Arab-Jewish ‘mixed cities’, where Palestinian neighbourhoods are systematically neglected; in Palestinian towns that pre-date the state, whose development is persistently limited by the national planning institutions; and by a legal land system that enables expropriation of lands and prevents the selling of state land to non-Jews, to name a few prominent strategies for Judaisation of space. Israel’s ethnicised class system that is maintained through spatial segregation is the foundation for its ‘ethnocratic’ regime: an ostensible democracy based upon ethno-national ideology (Yiftachel 2016). Colonial practices include subaltern classes in the national economy, but at the same time they objectify and bound particular groups into demarcated territorial and social spaces (Goswami 2004: 38). Lefebvre (2003: 125) noted that centrality orders differences in a hierarchy, through simultaneous segregation and integration. Spatial segregation is thus intrinsic
to the settler-colonial capitalist homogenisation project, delineating zones for capital accumulation according to an ethnic logic of space. PCI are informally restricted to ‘villages’, that are systemically marginalised by the state’s planning institutions with poor infrastructure, lack of available land for development and extreme over-crowdedness (Khamaisi 2013: 198). They are practically confined to a separate housing market, and most of those who are employed must commute into Jewish urban spaces (Hever 2012).

Therefore, when the government approved in 2014 the plan for the new ‘Arab City’ in the Galilee region, where the majority of PCI live, it seemingly signified a shift in policy. Since 1948, the Galilee region has been produced through multiple strategies of Judaisation of space; most explicitly, by a 1979 plan commonly known as ‘Judaisation of the Galilee’. That plan determined the establishment of exclusively Jewish gated communities in strategic locations, to ensure a Jewish majority in the region and block the sprawl of Palestinian communities. Built mostly on state lands expropriated from Palestinian towns, these gated communities are permitted to exclude ‘others’ by using market-developed neo-liberal practice of admitting certain residents that fit a particular lifestyle, thereby reproducing ethnicised spatial separation (Rosen and Grant 2011: 785). Consequently, PCI have recently started moving into predominantly Jewish cities in search of housing and employment, where they face both popular and institutionalised racism and discrimination. It is within this threat to Jewish domination in the region that a right-wing government approved the construction of an ‘urban zone for the non-Jewish population’ (the instructions of the National Committee for Planning and Construction, first published in 3 February 2009). The very first ‘Arab City’ to be built by the state, Tantour was designed as a modern, orderly space, a spatial antipode to the poor Palestinian localities of the Galilee region (Mebel, 2016, personal communication, 7 September). However, the site that was chosen is located on state lands that were expropriated in the 1970s from those very localities. This decision situates the new ‘Arab City’ in conflict with existing Palestinian localities, and it has instigated local resistance.

The planning process of Tantour illuminates how neo-liberal urbanisation articulates the ethnic logic of space. Originally, the government sanctioned a plan for 10,000 apartments for approximately 40,000 residents to be sold in the private market as ‘affordable housing’, with some limited areas for commercial and industrial uses. Tantour was devised as a new suburban neighbourhood to be built as an extension to the adjacent Palestinian town of Judeida-Makr, one of the poorest towns in Israel. The architects’ vision, in accordance with existing long-term plans of the national planning institutions, was to improve the town’s economy, public services and physical infrastructure by adding a large suburban neighbourhood that would appeal to a socioeconomically stronger Palestinian population in the region (Mebel 2016, personal communication, 7 September). Their plan (‘National Masterplan #44’) includes detailed urban design schemes for mid-size apartment buildings with semi-private public spaces that are expected to facilitate incremental transition of close-knit communities from Palestinian towns and villages into the new suburb. The plan aspires to eliminate the stigma of Judeida-Makr as an unplanned, backwards Palestinian ‘village’ and reproduce it as a new, modern ‘Arab City’. It is to do so by emulating the modernist space of Jewish cities in the Galilee. While the plan has been slowly moving up the bureaucratic channels of the centralised planning system, in 2016 Tantour was declared by the government’s newly established Housing Cabinet as a ‘special housing area’. This newly formed legal apparatus responds to the 2011 mass demonstrations in Israel that swept the nation with demands for social justice, and specifically affordable homeownership. The state resorted to increasing the supply of available land for development and to fast-tracking plans with a high volume of housing units, though arguably with deficient regulation on housing affordability. Plans promoted as ‘special housing areas’ may override existing plans
and are essentially exempted from public scrutiny, in favour of swift approval. A new plan for Tantour was devised by a new architect’s firm and exploded to 25,000 apartments for approximately 120,000 residents, with its territory circumscribing the existing town of Judeida-Makr. The revised plan for Tantour relies on an orthogonal grid pattern, completely foreign to the region, which is meant to encourage openness and continuity of urban space while allowing self-division of inhabitants to separate areas according to religious or family affiliation (Kolker 2016, personal communication, 27 September). With housing density and prices as high as in the predominantly Jewish metropolitan areas of the region, Tantour was conceived to be an antithesis to the Israeli myth of the ‘Arab village’ as unplanned and backwards, that is therefore fertile ground for resistance (Khamaisi 2013; Yacobi 2008). And so, could state-conceived urban development engender de-colonisation?

The Palestinian question is an urban question

Harvey (2012) defines the right to the city as a move towards greater democratic control over surplus that is concentrated in the city and an un-alienated right of urban inhabitants to produce for their own wants and needs (xvi, 23). It is the right to become collective users rather than capitalist consumers of space, and therefore requires anti-capitalist struggle. However, in the state mode of production, RTC must be understood as a political class struggle. Alternative organisation of production cannot be defined in capitalist terms alone, but must address the various specific forms of alienation imposed by the state. RTC thus becomes an ideological struggle over the logic that produces state-space. And since the spatial selectivity of nation-states is intertwined with class preference that excludes the masses from political power, concrete abstraction of ethno-national ideology is negotiated through class struggle and as such remains permanently fragile (Brenner and Elden 2009: 370; Poulantzas 2000: 127, 82, 120). Accordingly, national territory is always a relational product of struggle over the appropriation of social space (Kipfer and Goonewardena 2013: 110). Ethnocracy thus necessarily generates conflict which carries a potential to weaken the ethnocratic regime itself, if mobilising around different issues (such as housing) generates discontent with state politics and undermines ethno-national differentiation (Anderson 2016: 12). However, as Kipfer (2008) emphasises, claims of peripheralised groups against segregation can only be transformed to claims to the right to the city if they bring centrality to the margins (204); meaning, not a struggle for inclusion in state-space, but a transformation in control over state power. Mitchell (2003) contends that rights are always proven in practice and never guaranteed in the abstract (4). In other words, RTC – the appropriation of space and its production process by inhabitants – cannot be delivered by the state, but rather must be actively taken by inhabitants. The 2011 mass protests in Israel, despite some radical exceptions, focused on neo-liberal demands for affordable housing and did not succeed, or rather attempted to undermine ethno-national ideology (Marom 2013). It was not a right to the city moment. Unsurprisingly, the state responded by increasing housing supply in the market. In the case of Tantour, the state is providing a housing ‘solution’ to the ‘Arab sector’ by increasing the rate of homeownership and rendering PCI consumers of housing. Therefore, if it is to resist co-optation by the state, RTC must be the right of inhabitants for self-determination (Schmid 2012: 59). Resistance cannot come from state-initiated urban development, since urbanisation – even democratic, participatory – is a counter-revolutionary strategy (Harvey 2009: 279). RTC is therefore a struggle against integration into state-space as well as against the appropriation of such demands as a governance principle by state institutions. In order to revolutionise urbanisation, RTC must be a claim for de-colonising everyday life and to produce a radically different world (Goonewardena 2012: 98). Following the events of 1968 in Paris and the failure
of sociospatial peripheries to converge at a world-wide scale, Lefebvre develops the concept of ‘internal colonisation’ as a particular form of alienation (Kipfer and Goonewardena 2013: 173–174). It illustrates territorialised domination of everyday life in post-colonial capitalism, sustained by spatial segregation of underdeveloped regions and urban neighbourhoods (Lefebvre 2009 [1970]: 181). A neo-colonial economic system of uneven development is manifested in dispersal, migration and settlement strategies that render various sociospatial peripheries – gendered and racialised – the margins of metropolitan centres. De-colonisation therefore takes on clear anti-colonial meaning (Kipfer and Goonewardena 2013: 97). At the same time, since segregation is intrinsic to the state mode of production, anti-colonial struggle takes the form of an urban struggle for RTC.

In that sense, the Palestinian question is an urban question (Jabareen 2014b): political class struggle must view relations of production as intertwined with contemporary manifestations of colonial ideology. In The Critique of Everyday Life (1991: 37–38), Lefebvre warns that an abstract notion of class struggle that neglects historic modifications in capitalism would be blind to the particular contents of capitalist relations, and therefore futile. Explaining those particularities in colonial context, Kipfer (2011) shows how direct territorial rule has been shaping the subjectivity of both the colonised and the coloniser, by referring to counter-colonial texts from after the Second World War by French writers such as Césaire, Memmi and especially Fanon (95). A spatial hierarchy underpins the colonial imbalance of power: while the coloniser is interested in labour, the colonised is looking for self-determination (Austin 2010: 22; Thobani 2007: 13). Israel thus has a clear interest in sustaining a spatialised ‘Arab sector’ in the nation’s sociospatial margins. In fact, some writers have identified ‘creeping apartheid’ as a specific ethnocratic strategy for Judaisation of space, whereby strategies of domination are transferred from the 1967 occupied territories into Israel (Angotti 2013: 81; Yiftachel 2009: 93). For example, delegitimising PCI presence in the national territory; selective enforcement of ‘illegal’ construction in Palestinian localities within Israel; and militarisation of police force, especially in response to annual Day of Land demonstrations that commemorate the 1976 protest against expropriation of Palestinian lands in the Galilee region. Significantly, apartheid is also creeping through market-oriented policies that are part of global urbanisation processes (Yiftachel 2016: 35). As Gilbert (2009) shows in the Canadian settler-colonial context, a combination of neo-liberal values of free market, individual liberty and protection of national culture results in treating certain citizens as undeserving (35). The most banal acts of city planning correspondingly serve the ethno-national ideology of the ruling ethno-class, who sees itself as deserving of the national territory that is its homeland. Other groups in the same space are dominated and marginalised by racialised urban politics (Yacobi 2016: 112–113).

Still, urban regimes shaped by ethnocracy are potential sites for subverting the ethnic logic of space. Urban ethnocracy is where capitalism requires segregated, hierarchal spaces on the one hand, and free flow and flexibility of labour on the other, making it the space where ethno-national hegemony is most vulnerable to everyday life insurgency (Anderson 2016: 15; Yiftachel 2016: 34–35; Yiftachel 2006: 189). Privatisation of democratic planning procedures creates spaces for marginalised groups to exercise liberal claims within local urban development and contest the concentration of power within the ruling ethno-class. As planning becomes a site for political struggle, RTC may potentially be expressed as minority right to self-determination (Jabareen 2017: 18). Hence the recent move of Palestinian families into predominantly Jewish towns, especially in the Galilee region, is an active taking over of space and a threat to the Judaisation project. Meaning, Jewish cities becoming ‘mixed’ is as much a risk for as it is a result of the ethnocratic regime. Consequently, the ‘Arab City’ can be seen as a subtle attempt to re-establish ethnocratic hegemony through seemingly voluntary, market-driven suburbanisation
of the Palestinian middle-class. A solution to acute housing distress, advanced by well-meaning professional planners through manipulation of municipal boundaries within an existing ethnically divided economic development, the new ‘Arab City’ is the reincarnation of demographic engineering and a new version of colonial urbanism. The state cannot be expected to solve social problems, since it was mutually produced with them: the state is not taken over by a pre-given class formation but rather produced along with it, according to a specific mode of production (Jessop 2007: 7; Poulantzas 2000: 17). Ergo, urban development conceived by the state as an ‘Arab City’ cannot transform the conditions that spatialise the ‘Arab sector’. Instead, Tantour may help solve a potential political crisis that the government seeks to sidestep with its recent ‘special housing areas’ laws. A suburban alternative to Palestinian spaces of resistance that is still disconnected from Jewish spaces of employment, the project demarcates space for Palestinian nationality and responds to a set of obstacles in the conquest of labour and conquest of land: demands for intervention in housing supply; claims for investment in the ‘Arab sector’; and ethnic ‘mixing’ of urban spaces. Tantour will presumably draw the relatively stronger Palestinian population from surrounding localities, thus further marginalising Palestinian towns and somewhat reversing the ‘mixing’ of predominantly Jewish cities. The ‘Arab City’ thus becomes essential in delineating a ‘Jewish state’; and challenging urban development – essential in the Palestinian struggle for liberation.

Colonial fear and urban resistance

Out of tensions in urban ethnocracy in Israel, potential alternative appropriations of space may emerge, such as: public participation in the planning process; NGOs advocating planning rights; and legal recourse against the discriminatory land system. However, these cannot substantially undermine the ethnic logic of capitalist urban development. In fact, declaring the ‘Arab City’ a ‘special housing area’ shows how the state uses ostensible demands for RTC, reformulated by neo-liberal elites as demands for increased homeownership, as grounds for urban development. Development thus replaces demolition, neglect and disinvestment as an ethnocratic practice. Since the industrial city leads to decline in everyday life, Lefebvre was concerned with a social-cultural revolution wherein class struggle is crucial but not disconnected from broader de-commodification of society (1996: 149; 1991: 228). RTC is therefore required to overcome a risk of appropriation by the state. In response to the government’s announcement on the approval of a plan for a new ‘Arab City’, a group of activists in the adjacent Palestinian town of Judeida-Makr organised in opposition to the plan. The group is called ‘Khirak’, meaning ‘movement’ in Arabic, and it targets the central planning institutions as well as the local municipality, which they see as complicit with state strategies. In interviews, activists in the groups say Tantour is not meant for the local inhabitants of poor Judeida-Makr, who are in dire need of housing and infrastructure. ‘This is our land, but we cannot use it to build housing for ourselves’ (Khirak activists 2016, personal communication, 15 September). The Khirak is fighting not just against the project of Tantour, but also for basic everyday municipal services. Despite being a small group of 10–15 activists, they have been gaining local residents’ trust by becoming a de-facto municipality in their town and taking care of various local issues, thus actively replacing what they describe as a corrupt, incompetent and strikingly violent local government that most residents are afraid to resist. Such community-level institutions and interventions may form a resistance that represents the Palestinian identity and interest before state authorities (Khamaisi 2010: 68). The Khirak activists indeed fight for recognition from the state; for the right to use the lands that were expropriated from their town and to shape urban development according to local inhabitants’ housing needs. They contextualise their activism – demonstrations, meetings.
with planners, lobbying with politicians – within explicit fear from expulsion and displacement emanating from the Nakba:

People are still afraid. They can’t tell the difference between the Shin-Bet [the Israeli security service] and the central planning institutions. Everything that comes from the state is perceived as potential threat. Resisting the state is considered risky.… Our struggle is successful, regardless of its outcome, because we fight against fear. By showing residents [of Judeida-Makr] there is someone who stands against state planning, we show them they should not be afraid.

(Khirak activist 2016, personal communication, 15 September)

Moreover, the Khirak accuse the Jewish planners of Tantour for not paying attention to local needs during the first stages of planning that included public participation meetings. They report that only certain groups were included, such as Palestinian planners and academics who do not necessarily represent local communities but are considered ‘Arab sector’. The explanation is simple: those who were invited to be heard were the potential future residents of the project; that is to say, middle-class families who may hinder exclusively Jewish cities in the Galilee. The struggle of the Khirak is therefore a political class struggle that is threefold: against their own municipal government that depends on the state for resources and cannot oppose the imposed development; against the expropriation of lands by the Zionist ethnocratic regime; and against neo-liberal gentrification that would turn their town to ‘the back yard of a new suburb’ (Khirak activists 2016, personal communication, 9 September). Thus it is an anti-colonial struggle against the ethnic logic of space. Fitly, the Khirak actively appropriates space by holding social and political gatherings on the lands designated for Tantour (Khirak activists 2016, personal communication, 29 September). Urban ethnocracy hence provides the Khirak an opportunity to articulate their fight for self-determination, for sustaining Palestinian presence on the landscape and against the homogenising logic of the ethnocratic regime as a legitimate fight against urban development. Although urban ethnocracy implies new, inconspicuous ways to segregate and new strategies for co-opting RTC, at the same time it creates new sites for struggle to undermine ethnocratic hegemony. Indeed, local inhabitants use their citizenship to demand alternative planning from the state as well as appropriate state-space by using it for their own political mobilisation. The Khirak appeal that the lands will be given back to the local authority, they reject high-volume residential development in Tantour and favour a low-density neighbourhood that would provide housing for the growing families of Judeida-Makr (Khirak activists 2016, personal communication, 29 September). Their struggle thus re-politicises urban development that was intended to provide housing ‘solutions’ in a neo-liberal context.

Recognising that colonisation operates through territorial organisation, Fanon conceived of de-colonisation as a practice of reappropriating space (Kipfer and Goonewardena 2013: 99). Anti-colonial struggle should therefore provide an alternative logic to that which segregates colonised space. The rejection of massive urban development and the demand for localised intervention instead may seem a refusal by the local community to open up to modern, progressive development. Some Jewish and Palestinian planners involved in the Tantour project disregard Khirak resistance for representing traditionalism and for not trying to stop the inevitable (Khamaisi 2016; Kolker 2016; personal communications). By insisting on reproducing their space, the activists are seemingly risking reproducing their own oppression by the ethnic logic of space. Yiftachel (2006) argues that any territorial partitioning of space according to ethno-national principles would simply generate new forms of segregation (263). Clearly,
homogenising ethno-national collectivities is the project of the nation-state and cannot be a strategy for de-colonisation (Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995: 32). However, the Khirak insistence on development that, in their view, puts the lands back in the hands of local Palestinians, must be examined in the context of the ethnic logic of space. In the asymmetric landscape that is Israel’s national territory, Palestinians are effectively excluded from most urban spaces. In the privatised housing market founded upon the ethno-class system, urban regeneration as in the larger plan for Tantour would trample on the local community and re-marginalise those in the lower ethno-class who are most struggling. In light of Judaisation of space, the Khirak demand that the state invest in an existing Palestinian town instead of building a new suburb is certainly revolutionary, as it undermines the colonial underpinnings of the ethnocratic regime.

Conclusions

Acknowledging that anti-capitalist struggle for de-colonisation must be defined in political terms, this chapter alleged that multiple, alternative ideologies that produce space both with and against the capitalist state must be considered inherent in what is otherwise a qualified epistemology of urbanisation. First, the chapter has shown that in the case of the new ‘Arab City’ in Israel, state-initiated urban development ostensibly for the benefit of the marginalised Palestinian ethno-class is in fact promoting Zionist ‘conquest of land’. Moreover, recent transformations in the national planning system provide a countering strategy to potential opposition, justified by a neo-liberal approach to relieving housing distress. Second, as evident in the planners’ vision of Tantour as a middle-class suburb to replace a Palestinian ‘village’ as well as in the state’s strategy of increasing Palestinian homeownership, a neo-liberal understanding of RTC threatens the ‘Arab sector’ in Israel and the Palestinian liberation struggle itself with integration into public demand for housing supply. Third, the Khirak’s anti-colonial struggle against state-led urban development in Tantour proves that while a neo-liberal understanding of RTC may easily be appropriated by Zionist ideology of Judaisation of space, the inhabitants’ imaginary of their right to the city may produce a political class struggle that seeks to undermine ethno-class spatialisation.

RTC as a political movement therefore must not be understood as a fixed struggle. It is rather best defined in relation to particular urban regimes, where everyday life and attempts at its depoliticisation by state interests are shaped. In 1968, Lefebvre laid the foundation for considering RTC as an ongoing social struggle against integration into the spaces of global capitalism (see: Lefebvre 1996), but it becomes politically useful when forged in the context wherein it is infringed. As the concept becomes contested and the struggle itself vulnerable to usurpation by the urbanising ideology, RTC needs to be brought back from liberal demands for inclusion to the everyday life of inhabitants, challenging strategies such as ‘affordable housing’. Similarly, academics who focus on global urbanisation or a globalised understanding of RTC risk treating it as always already defeated by neo-liberal urbanisation. Instead, understanding urbanisation and resistance to it requires focusing on particular contexts of colonisation, where RTC is endangered and potentially redeemed. Indeed, de-colonisation may be possible if RTC becomes a demand that subverts state-space. Therefore, political resistance to urbanisation that undermines its ideological foundation is more urgent than ever.

References


Khirak activist group (2016) Interviewed (for several hours) on 9, 15 and 29 September, Acre, Israel.


Lefebvre in Palestine


