



Palestinian wearing *kufiya* with Jewish man in New York.

Photo by Said Elatab

Courtesy *Middle East Report*

Having learned something about its history in Palestine, I decided to attempt to understand why the *kufiya*, so prominent in the “field” where I had worked, had turned up at home.

I want to argue that the *kufiya*’s appearance in the mid-eighties was not mere coincidence or fashion, but an effect of linkages between U.S. and Palestinian history that official discourse continues to deny. I want to expose these hidden connections by tracing the U.S. and Palestinian official and unofficial histories of the *kufiya* through all their dislocations and interconnections, using a method I am calling “double vision.” I hope to (1) demonstrate that the *kufiya* is neither as “natural” in the West Bank nor as “unnatural” in downtown New York as it might appear; (2) show that the relation between style and politics is a continuum rather than an opposition, and (3) suggest that the ethnographic object of study is located as much “here” as “out there,” as much “then” as “now.”

My field research, conducted primarily in the West Bank (but also Israel and the Gaza Strip), concerned the memories of what Pales-