was momentarily but dramatically overturned during the 1936 revolt. While the official political leaders of the national struggle for independence came from the urban upper and middle classes, the armed rebel bands that began to operate in the highlands were composed almost exclusively of peasants. These guerilla fighters took on the *kufiya* as their insignia. Wrapped close around their heads, the *kufiya* provided anonymity to fighters wandering around the countryside, disguising their identities from spies and helping them elude capture by the British.[6] During the insurgency's first two years, whenever fighters slipped into towns along with other villagers, their conspicuous *kufiya*s made them targets for arrest by the British army. So on August 26, 1938, when the revolt had reached its apogee and began to take control of urban areas, rebel leaders ordered all Palestinian Arab townsmen to discard the *tarbush* and don the *kufiya*. British officials were amazed that the new fashion spread across the country with "lightning rapidity" (*Palestine Post*, September 2, 1938).[7] While the order was issued to help the rebels blend in when they entered the cities, it was equally a move in the wider social struggle within the national movement. Harking back to Arab Revolt and the Damascus battles over headgear, the rebel command asserted that whereas the fez was associated with the Ottoman Turks, the *kufiya* was the headgear of the Arab nation.[8] Dr. Khalil Totah, Palestinian director of the American Friends School at Ramallah, commented privately:

> The Igal [and *kufiya*] of the Arab today is surely a liberty cap but conceived in an original and native fashion. . . . By making Supreme Court judges, big Government officials, important merchants and the entire professional class and in fact everybody, wear an igal the rebels have made a grand sweep in the direction of democracy. . . . The fellahin do not conceal their delight at seeing their "uppers," the effendis, come down a peg and look like them in the matter of head dress. They feel proud of having raised themselves in the social scale.[9]

Rebels even resorted to force to make reluctant effendis put on this lower-status garb (Morton 1957: 53). The order therefore was not merely a matter of military strategy, but a symptom of social antagonism. It represented a symbolic inversion, a reversal of the "natural" semiotic hierarchy of clothing that violated the symbols of power (cf. Guha 1983: 61–63).