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In the memory of the 26th January 1978: a popular labor upheaval on the path of the national democratic revolution

We celebrate today the 37th memory of **the 26th January 1978 Glorious intifada (upheaval)**, the most prominent struggle the working class has fought since 1956 when the reactionary puppet regime was imposed on our people. Our people's march against the regime's non-patriotic and non-popular decisions was marked with an important combative cumulation as it has oppressed and exterminated our national strugglers and worked hard on domesticating all the organizations such as the **UGTT** or the **UGET** and drew the media to its side to pass its policies of betrayal to the people and its patriotic progressist forces, in addition to the restriction of the political work except for the ruling party which endeavored to spread its reactionary reign under the power of one party and one inspiring leader. To succeed in this, the regime started to apply its so called "experience of Mutual Assistance" supported by "the Funds for Despoliation". This experience was doomed to a fast economic and social failure and contributed in further impoverishing the people and sabotaging the national economy so tied to the international monopoly. The regime then applied the so-called "Openness" liberal policy that paved the way to the plunder for the Imperialism, the Compradors and the prominent feudalists. The social gap widened between the rich and the impoverished. The social misery spread and resulted in social upheavals and protests against the puppet regime that deteriorated the social situation of the working class and all the other social classes especially in the 70s when the legislation of many laws further exploited the laborers and the other social strata and depleted the national resources such as the law of April 1972, the law of August 1974 and the law of July 1976.

These laws opened the doors to foreign monopolies so the laborers resorted to the organization of protests and many strikes within their Union UGTT. Many sectorial, regional and central struggles were launched followed by holding the National Council for UGTT after the hesitation of the Unionist leaders in taking the decision for a general strike resulting from oppression, exploitation and daily popular endurance. Among its aspects we name:

- the deterioration of the purchasing power of the popular classes
- the increase of the prices that exceeded the ceiling agreed on by the government and the UGTT
- the intensive exploitation of the laborers and their oppression under the pretext of improving the production and increasing the productivity
- controlling the union activities and restricting them before 26th January 1978
- Temporizing and procrastinating the implementation of the contracts and the mutual agreements signed by the social members.
- Refusing the regime's failing policy and refusing to take the laborers and the people responsible for bailing out
- Pursuing the Unionists, arresting them, defaming their struggles and accusing them of betrayal by cooperating with foreign powers to overthrow the regime and destroying the economy and the social stability

These repressive activities have intensified especially after holding the repressive council of the Union (now the National Council). These struggles reached the peak on the 26th January 1978: the General Strike day. The latter was successful in their union, adamant as they were to keep their organization militant and independent despite the endeavors of the regime to prevent their success resorting to campaigns to defame the laborers and the people's struggles and exploiting the ruling regime's militias. Then the regime was forced to call for the help of the military forces in order to repress the popular labor upheaval resorting to live bullets. This day scored a number of martyrs and wounded. Hundreds of militants, legitimate bodies and nationalists were sent to jail. Many among them were tortured to death. The union headquarters were attacked and other regime followers were appointed. The Union's newspaper "the People" was restricted and other repressive activities were practiced on the laborers and their organization. The laborers found such an important local (sectorial) popular, Arab and international approval. The laborers' upheaval denounced the regime and its non-popular nature.

This general strike turned into a popular movement of protest to support the laborers of all the classes and the popular strata. Their mottos varied to the extent of calling for overthrowing the regime. The confrontations between the protesters and the repressive regime forces mounted and led to shedding the blood of many martyrs among the rows of our proud people. That was a brave upheaval against the oppressive policy and the national and class coercion practiced by the reactionary regime under the lead of Bourguiba.

Hundreds of the wounded and the jailed marked the history of our proud people and the history of UGTT with a prominent glorious slaughterhouse thanks to their sacrifices, despite many conspiring leaders, betraying opportunists and bureaucracies.

Our revival of this period of struggle in the history of the working class and the people is indeed a revival of the national memory and the slaughterhouses resulting from popular struggles that the endeavors of the regime and its experienced followers- whom we now see falsely applauding the glory of the betrayer of the country and the perpetrator of the people, falsifying the truth, the history and denying the spilled blood of the martyrs of this popular upheaval- failed in suppressing.

The survival of this regime since its instating up to the present moment on its successive governments whether modernist or religion-exploiting governments-like Annahdha and Nidaa Tounes- is but a perpetuation of the same policy and the same choices that oppose the laborers and the popular classes: further impoverishment and oppression, more dilapidation of the national resources and more reliability on Imperialism. The procedures taken are but a confirmation of imposing the same non-national and non-popular choices starting from the deterioration of the purchasing capacity of the laborers and the other classes, the cancellation of the Fund for Support to the denial of the upheaval's martyrs and wounded.

The different protests and strikes in various sectors indicate an upcoming popular uproar. Let the Nationalists be ready to enlighten the path of the People's salvation to stand by them in their struggle and effective leadership to progress on the revolutionary path that the popular upheavals have prepared and drew, including the last one on 17th December/ 14th January 2011.

The sacrifices of the 26th January will not be vain and we will not forget the blood of all the upheavals' martyrs and the popular struggles that taught us the real meaning of sacrifice and

allegiance to the country, the liberty and the national dignity and to the revolution to chase the enemies of the people and the entire humanity.

The Revolutionary Patriotic Socialist party (ALWATAD)