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Group IT

# Amicus/T&G And Lloyds TSB – Cosily Tucked-Up Together

**M**embers will have had little choice but to see the latest diatribe from Amicus/T&G in Group IT on the offshoring of IT jobs, since the Bank sent it out to all staff on Amicus's behalf.

Not only is this a serious breach of protocol but it underlines the desperate situation Amicus/T&G are in – not even knowing who and where its members are! But just how dependent upon the Bank's support it really is. So much for independent trade unionism!

That the Bank agreed to send out Amicus/T&G's newsletter not only shows a breathtaking level of partiality it also exposes the lengths it will go to in propping-up Amicus/T&G.

However, what is worse is the delusional rant of Amicus/T&G at LTU to which the Bank has lent tacit agreement. I appreciate it will have been a nice change for Amicus/T&G members to actually get a newsletter but the fact that it was sent by the Bank ought to remove any lingering belief that Amicus/T&G might be independent.

All IT staff need to know what this mutual propping-up exercise is all about.

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## Amicus/T&G's Meaningless Offshoring Agreement

Rather than opposing the Offshoring of Jobs to India, Amicus/T&G gave the 'green light' to the Bank to offshore even more jobs abroad. This is best summed up by the comment of The Times newspaper at the time Amicus/T&G signed a similar agreement in Barclays.

The article began by saying "Unifi (now Amicus/T&G) signed a deal yesterday to allow Barclays Bank to send thousands of jobs offshore" and then proceeded to say that the agreement "will be seen as an admission that the union is

powerless to stem the flow of jobs to India". Of course, just recently Barclaycard announced it was transferring 630 more Call Centre jobs to India.

The fact is that whilst not preventing even one job going to India, this so-called 'Offshoring Agreement' has provided the Bank with the opportunity to give the media the impression it has union support.

Furthermore the statement that "Lloyds TSB guarantees a new job for everyone whose role is offshored" is a grossly misleading attempt to defend the indefensible. The facts speak for themselves:

- **The Bank only guarantees that it will OFFER staff an alternative job. This need neither be suitable nor even within reasonable travel distance. One 58 year old who lost her job in Newcastle in a junior grade was offered an alternative job in Glasgow, 154 miles away!**

When the Newcastle Call Centre closed, just 20% of staff were found alternative jobs in the Bank and 400 were even denied redundancy payments because of Bank inflexibility concerning when staff could receive redundancy payments if they found alternative jobs outside of the Bank.

- **The Bank has used a process known as 'offshoring by proxy' to obscure the fact that jobs in the UK - such as those at Peterborough - are being lost as a consequence of offshoring; thereby side-tracking the 'Offshoring Agreement' altogether.**

The Times went on, "Unifi (now Amicus/T&G), Lloyds' smaller bank union, which represents over 3,000 workers, regarded the horizon and decided the tide of movement was inevitable ... "We're

frankly a bit more realistic", said Ian MacLean, a Unifi official who negotiated with Lloyds"

Meanwhile, by contrasting Amicus/T&G's and LTU's very different approaches, the journalist insists:

"They (Amicus/T&G) think it's inevitable ... (LTU) take a very different view and think that the tide seems to be turning."

The article then proceeded to detail LTU's campaign: our petition that has so far been signed by more than 400,000 customers, our data protection challenge, etc.

Amicus /T&G's defeatist attitude toward offshoring - and as a consequence its meaningless Offshoring Agreement - has allowed the Bank to claim that moving work to India has union support.

## Amicus/T&G

Amicus has now merged with the Transport and General Workers Union and is part of a union with two million members that is talking of plans for further mergers across the world to form a global political power to fight the worst excesses of capitalism! However, given the unconvincing support of Amicus members – less than 20% of members actually supported the merger – such global ambitions have little to do with staff in Lloyds TSB.

The reality is that within Lloyds TSB, Amicus/ T&G's membership is materially less than a tenth of LTU's and this is despite virtually giving membership away – a loss leader due to desperation if ever there was one. That is why it relies so heavily on the Bank for support and why the Bank is happy to provide it. It is always

helpful for companies to have a supposed trade union that "likes to say yes".

Some facts staff should be aware of:

- **Amicus/T&G's weakness and lack of independence comes at a cost. A cost to its remaining rump of members who are lumbered with agreements reached by an organisation that in any other company would have been de-recognised because of its poor membership long ago. Pay and the supposed Offshoring Agreement are two recent examples. There's also a cost to the Bank, not in the sense of the hundreds of thousands of pounds it spends annually subsidising Amicus/T&G and which it can easily afford but in the appalling industrial relations that result from its lack of judgement.**
- **The Bank pays Amicus/T&G representatives' expenses for turning up to negotiate with it – often involving hotel accommodation.**
- **In disciplinary and other hearings Amicus/T&G members are represented by seconded staff who are employed by the Bank and not by independent, full-time union officials. The Bank has long paid for their salaries and provided Bank cars, mobile phones and Bank premises to work out off.**

Can anyone still believe this lot are at all independent?

## As for the Bank!

Finally, there has to be a word for the Bank. It has been a shameful day for Lloyds TSB whose actions cannot go unchallenged since

we understand that the Employee Engagement Director in Bristol (Industrial Relations Director in old money) gave the green light to send Amicus/ T&G's newsletter out. We have long known the lengths the Bank will go to in order to prop-up Amicus/T&G but this is a new low.

## Amicus/T&G members

The remaining Amicus/T&G members really ought now to ask themselves some simple but vital questions about the sort of trade union they want representing them. For instance:

- **Do they really want to belong to a trade union that relies on the Bank to send out its newsletters?**
- **Do they really want to belong to a trade union that relies on the Bank to pay for its members to be represented in hearings with the Bank?**
- **Do they really want to belong to a trade union that has to give away its membership as a loss leader?**

If the answer to any of these is "No" then there is a real alternative. One that the overwhelming majority of Lloyds TSB staff have already recognised – a union that does not posture and make agreements because it has no option, but one that is truly independent of the Bank, does not seek succour from it and has only its members to answer to – LTU.

To join today simply ring 01234 262868 or go online at [ltu.co.uk](http://ltu.co.uk)

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