

Pensions Cuts, Terms & Conditions And The Need For Strong Unions

Over recent months LTU has felt it necessary to draw attention to the miscalculations and weak leadership of Accord and Unite, in an effort to encourage both to adopt a far more resolute approach to negotiations with the Bank.

Both HBOS-heritage unions' obsession with their 'Partnership Agreement' with the Bank seemed to paralyse them from standing up to the Bank on behalf of their members for fear that by doing so might jeopardise their cosy relationship and take them out of their comfort zone.

Naïvety & Miscalculation

LTU was also alarmed when, in its New Year's Message to staff in January, Accord said:

"If we ask ourselves whether a tougher, more critical and confrontational style with employers would deliver more for our members ... we can find no evidence currently to suggest that our approach has delivered less for our members than others".

At the time of its consultative ballot, Accord also said it wasn't recommending that its members vote against the Bank's proposed terms and conditions - including massive cuts in pensions - because it believed that ***"tactically it will put us in a better position in the future talks with the Bank"***.

Given the Bank's announcement last week that it is imposing its Pension Cuts, there can be no clearer indication of what a serious miscalculation this was.

Waking Up To Reality

Commenting on the Bank's imposition of Pensions Cuts announced last week, Accord's General Secretary commented in a Newsletter that:

"It was the darkest day in my industrial relations experience ... We have never before seen an employer with whom we have tried to maintain a positive relationship treat the views of staff with such contempt".

In contrast, LTU has never been reluctant to stand up to the Bank and 'tell it as it is', despite repeatedly being criticised by the two other unions for being too critical.

The real pity is that had the two other unions not previously been so reluctant to follow LTU's lead and instead had stood up earlier to the Bank, we may not be in the position we are now.

LTU ... Representing Staff Professionally

LTU has never been a party to any 'Partnership Agreement' with the Bank and we have also not been receiving any financial or organisational subsidies from the Bank, for fear that doing so could jeopardise our ability to act independently.

Now really is the time for any HBOS staff who want to be sure that their needs and concerns are represented professionally to join LTU: the only trade union operating within the Lloyds Banking Group that has consistently opposed the Bank's Pensions Cuts and proposed new Terms and Conditions.

STEVE TATLOW
Assistant General Secretary