

**J**UST nine months ago the coalition government reached a so called agreement declaring the "detailed proposals for robust action to tackle unacceptable bonuses in the financial services sector" would be brought forward.

After nine months, when the Wall Street bank Goldman Sachs announced that its employees, 6,000 of whom work in the City - earned an average of £268,000 in pay and bonuses, the only honest response from this Tory led government is to admit that its commitment to robust action on this matter is nothing more than a sham.

Why should the vast majority of people, who were, or are, innocent victims of the global financial crisis, be made to suffer?

This whole saga is sickening from spineless politicians so forthright in their promises to curb bonuses before the election, so timid as they roll over for their banker friends.

In the meantime we are faced with years of social and economic misery as the coalition's cuts are loaded on the poorest and most vulnerable under the discredited slogan "we are all in this together."

Everything from the increase in VAT, cuts in housing benefit and childcare support, care for the elderly, the abolition of educational maintenance allowance, the slashing of basic council services, public sector job losses by the hundreds of thousands, falling real incomes and mounting unemployment are now the order of the day.

The ill thought out and expensive plans to reorganise the NHS, is seen by many health experts as a "comprehensive demolition job" with an open invitation to creeping privatisation. This and the cost of new tuition fees that brought thousands of



## ARE WE REALLY 'ALL IN THIS TOGETHER'?

students on to the streets are all part of a small state dogma behind the political sound bites that we are now subjected to on a daily basis through today's media outlets.

At a recent meeting Emily Thornberry, the Shadow Care Minister, indicated that the most important issue facing the care of older people was the impact of the spending cuts.

These would devastate social care across the country. Research carried out showed that those local authorities who spend the most on social services will be the hardest hit by the government cuts.

Cuts are now coming so thick and fast that many are not getting reported, a small example of those that have, see half of Hammersmith and Fulham children's centres to be shut. Westminster cutting £14.5m from care of the elderly and disabled. Bradford shutting 5 care homes for dementia, with Lightburn hospital for elderly rehabilitation to close in east Glasgow.

The TUC march and rally on the 26th March, will campaign against these savage cuts and seeks to bring together not just trade unionists, but community groups, service users and everyone hit by the cuts and who value our public services.

The Retired Members Section (RMS) of ASLEF will be there, because it's our fight, our right, and our responsibility to try to protect the poorest and most vulnerable in our society.

**Tony West**

**National Secretary, ASLEF**





# RAILW

**I**N April 2011 the coalition Government will put its hands into the pockets of every Railway Pension Fund pensioner and take out your money to pay for the Bankers ruin of the economy.

The bankers' reward for their crisis is millions of pounds each, and yours is a reduction of your annual pension increase.

How is this possible? Well, unfortunately the Railway Pension Fund annual inflation increases are linked to that of the Civil Service, which has always in the past used the Retail Price Index (RPI). But this Government has decided that in future all increases in pension in payment, for those Civil Service Pensioners will be limited to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and not the Retail Price Index. Therefore this April all retired Civil Servants, and those in the Railway Pension Fund will be limited to CPI instead of the previously used RPI.

So what's the difference? The September figures are used for the following April rises.

## Will you be man

THE RMS Committee is seeking your support in making the march and demonstration to be held in London on March 26th one of the largest events of its kind. We are asking all our members and the membership in the wider ASLEF movement to be there if at all possible.

The issues are known to most of you, for the intervening months since the government (CONDEMS) came into power, every day another policy is announced, another cut in benefits, another increase in the cost of living.

There are continuing attacks on workers, their wages with the public sector pay freeze, followed by job cuts in the thousands and at the same time attacking those bodies such as Sure Start and benefits associated with children, families and

the disabled or since the NHS is the jewel in the country's crown but surely privatised and handed to private companies – some support this, how do not.

On pensions a retirement with the of only a few, more increases in pension a different measure Consumer Price Index sure you all know an advance but a

There have been investment in hospitals, schools, transport and armed services. If nothing remains with the exception of the banker's bonuses

The list grows the day and we need together with the labour movement to get changes in many of which w

## Local cuts the deepest?

I know some of you think politics is a boring subject, that's what politicians want you to believe, so you will turn off, while they gently shaft you. The new administration haven't got the bottle to do it themselves, so what they have done is get your local council and soon your GP to do it for them.

They have, in their misguided wisdom, decided to give local councils a lump sum without any of it ring fenced, giving councils the ability to spend as they wish. However at the same time funding has been cut by 25% and councils are not able to raise extra revenue elsewhere, making it impossible for them to provide services they have been doing so up to now.

The people that will be most affected will be the young and the old, as councils withdraw support funding from these areas as they are easy targets. The government has withdrawn council funding for school refurbishment and new builds, whilst at the same time privatising others that will end up costing us more in the long run.

They whinge on about deficit while they are spending millions fixing something that was not broken - it is called the NHS. The last administration had it right, with doctors treating patients in buildings fit for purpose, hospitals providing a service with a performance time line and they were making the NHS administration efficient and cost effective. With the GPs running the show - what next? It's hard enough to get a referral now, so in the future you might get one if you are lucky. They kid you they are freeing the Health Service, what they mean is getting it ready for privatisation, so more foreign companies can come in and rip us off.

So put pen to paper and challenge you MP to prove me wrong.

**P J Smith, RMS Committee Member**

# RAILWAY PENSION FUND

That puts this April's rise at 4.7% under RPI but only 3.1% with CPI.

For every £100 of your current pension the rise under CPI will be £3.10. If it had stayed at RPI the rise would have been £4.70. Not much difference people may think, but taken over 10 years and using this year's same inflation figures the changes becomes rather larger. After 10 years the £100 figure under RPI would have risen to £158.29, but with CPI it would have only risen to £135.69. A difference of £22.90, multiply that by your actual pension, and the result is quite frightening.

But we all know that even RPI does not equate to the real cost of living rises of retired people. Food, fuel and clothing are all surging ahead at even faster rates.

So when I say that the coalition government has put its hands into your pockets it really feels more like a mugging.

The Minimum Income Standard (MIS) which is used to measure basic household

expenses such as council tax, water, public transport, energy and food increased by 38% in the 10 years to April 2010. In that time RPI rose by 31% but CPI only rose by 23% in the same 10 years.

So even those lucky enough to remain on RPI lose spending power every year, and those whose pensions are linked to CPI will really suffer through no fault of their own. We all did that was asked of us and worked and paid our pension contributions to try and ensure a decent retirement. And what happens? The Tories and their mealy mouthed Liberal Democrat lap dogs happened. Why does every generation have to find out for themselves what they are like? We all knew, but younger people fell into the trap of buying into the lies of the Tories and the "say one thing and do the opposite" Lib Dems

As has been said don't be old, disabled or poor with this government in power. The



students won't lie down before the assault on them. Neither should those in the Railway Pension Fund.

**John Robson**

ASLEF RMS Committee member

## Searching for the alternative?

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the manifestos of any of the parties at the election.

Of course the major lesson of 2010 has to be that political parties are not to be trusted. The Labour Party has an uphill task to win back lost support and bring forward policies which are clear alternatives, policies that the trade unions will support along with their membership and those in the wider movement.

This march is for the children, family, public services, NHS, decent wages and conditions, proper welfare provisions for the sick/disabled. It's for the future and a brighter one to which we aspire. We have as pensioners worked for what we have got, we remember the legacy of the Tories. We cannot let it happen again to our communities and public services but many young people cannot find



meaningful employment and many workers are considering working beyond 65 years out of economically driven necessity. Of course we could feel it's got nothing to do with us. We hope that will never be the case.

ASLEF members have a proud record of fighting for a better society, based on fairness, justice and equality and protecting the vulnerable.

Your Committee believes we are all in it together, please be there.

**Ray Jackson**  
National Chair, Retired  
Members Section

**MARCH FOR THE ALTERNATIVE: JOBS • GROWTH • JUSTICE**

**SAY NO TO UNFAIR AND UNNECESSARY SPENDING CUTS**

**BACK THE ALTERNATIVE**

- a Robin Hood tax on the banks
- closing tax loopholes
- policies for jobs and green growth

**SATURDAY 26 MARCH 2011**

Assemble at 11am on Victoria Embankment, between Temple Place and Blackfriars, to march to a rally in Hyde Park

more details at  
[www.tuc.org.uk/march](http://www.tuc.org.uk/march)  
join the campaign at  
[www.falseeconomy.org.uk](http://www.falseeconomy.org.uk)

ALL TOGETHER FOR SERVICES TUC

Join the RMS's new and exciting fundraising scheme

# The 500 Club

Pay a £4 stake each month and be entered into a monthly draw to be in with a chance of winning a cash prize!

Of the total monies collected 50% will help fund RMS activities and half will go back to club members as prizes.



The more members in the club,  
the bigger the prize!

If you would like to take part complete and return the below slip by 21st March 2011 and we will contact you with further details.

I would like to be a member of The 500 Club

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

return slip to:  
ASLEF  
9 Arkwright Rd  
Hampstead  
London  
NW3 6AB