

CHAPTER 9

CREATING 'COMMON WEALTH': WORK, MONEY, INDUSTRY AND TAX

Imagine a world of sustainable prosperity for all, one in which secure, satisfying, decently paid jobs are the norm. Where the power to create money is taken out of private hands and democratised for public benefit. Imagine going to a People's Bank, confident that it is working for you rather than for its shareholders. Imagine that you and everyone else are being taxed with fairness and sustainability in mind, and that tax is actually collected. Imagine working in a more mixed and localised economy. Imagine a revival of workers' rights and vibrant trade unions. Imagine knowing that almost half of national income is spent on the common good – on the ties that bind us together – rather than on paying down debts you didn't cause.

This is the common wealth we create by working together, sharing the fruits of our work fairly and building the infrastructure of our common life. Right now, society is too unequal, too much valuable work goes unrecognised, and our infrastructure is not fit for a common and sustainable life. The Green Party's proposals will make for a fairer and more sustainable society.

WORK

People want to work and the Green Party believes in helping make that happen. We also believe everyone should be properly paid for the work they do, ending working poverty and the job insecurity that has people lining up outside food banks and left at the mercy of payday lenders. We don't just need jobs, we need more worthwhile secure jobs.

Under the Coalition, 1 million jobs have been lost from the public sector – from the NHS, from schools and colleges, from local government, from the institutions that bind us together, from front-line services. We will put them back.

The Coalition claims to have created 2.5 million jobs in the private sector to compensate. But:

- Many job-market casualties have turned to self-employment, where life can be precarious and salaries low (there has been a 20% fall in the salaries of the self-employed since 2007, compared with a 6% fall in employee earnings);
- 15% of the workforce is self-employed. For some this is by choice, for others it is because they can't get better work;
- Many new jobs are insecure, poorly paid and with contracts that fail to balance the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees;
- The young in particular suffer, with one in three young workers now on low pay; and
- They've redefined some jobs out of the public and into the private sector.

In place of this workplace lottery, the Green Party proposes a package for sustainable prosperity: ending austerity, expanding and renewing public services such as social care, transport and social housing, investing in energy conservation and sustainable resource use, and promoting green public works for environmental benefit. This will create 1 million new satisfying jobs and training places within a year.