



[Gareth Morris](#)

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I was sacked by GCHQ, but I have no regrets

Gareth blogs about his experiences when the trade union ban was brought in at GCHQ in 1984.

In January 1984 I received the letter telling me I had five weeks to resign my trade union membership or face being sacked. Five years later I was still there.

Like my colleagues, I was offered £1,000 to sign away my rights. At the time I didn't have a mortgage or a family, like many of my friends who felt they had to sign, and who eventually did so under duress.

I wasn't allowed to move jobs, there was no promotion, no training, but during those five years they still sent me abroad for work, which meant I couldn't have been a threat to national security, which we were accused of at the time by the government.

GCHQ tried to find me alternative employment - I had interviews at the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Agriculture - but those jobs weren't the same. I wasn't prepared to leave a job I loved doing.

I was fortunate that the month after I was sacked from GCHQ I started work at the Bank of England. At my interview my interviewer pointed out she had seen a photo of me in the papers leaving my old job in Cheltenham. In my new job they made me chair of their local union branch, BIFU.

For me it was a matter of principle. I have no regrets. Yes, I may have been promoted earlier at GCHQ if I'd signed the letter, but after the ban was lifted, I returned there, resumed my career and stayed there until I retired.

I shall never forget the support I received from my union and the wider trade union movement. I'm looking forward to catching up with old friends on Saturday [at the [march and demo in Cheltenham](#)]. I hope to see you there!