

26 January 2024

E-book about GCHQ ban available now

The digital reissue of GCHQ union ban book is available to purchase ahead of march and rally in Cheltenham to commemorate its 40th anniversary.

Tomorrow (27), the [joint PCS/TUC march and rally will take place through Cheltenham](#) to mark the [40th anniversary of the ban on trade union membership at GCHQ](#).

Originally released in 1994 – just three years before the Labour Party overturned the union ban at GCHQ – [‘A Conflict of Loyalties’ by Hugh Lanning and Richard Norton-Taylor is now available as an ebook](#) (epub) on Manifesto Press.

Hugh, who was PCS deputy general secretary until his retirement in May 2013, served as the trade union official responsible for GCHQ members at the time of the trade union ban, as well as the subsequent campaign to overturn it.

Richard Norton-Taylor is an award-winning former defence and security editor of the Guardian who covered the dispute for the same newspaper.

The title, ‘A Conflict of Loyalties’, refers to Margaret Thatcher’s infamous announcement that it wasn’t possible for someone to be in a union and be loyal to their country.

In the book, Hugh and Richard recount the events surrounding the ban, explore the motives of the Thatcher government and GCHQ management, and chart the course of the eventual restoration of trade union rights at GCHQ.

As they tell this story, they also make the case for the fundamental importance of the right to belong to a trade union.

This re-issue is timed to coincide with tomorrow’s march and rally in Cheltenham, and is likely to appeal both to current and retired PCS members, as well as general readers who are interested in trade union history.

Other reading:

Hugh and Richard have also recently written for the PCS blog on the GCHQ union ban.

[Hugh reflected on the historical significance of this struggle](#) and its relevance to recent attacks on trade union freedoms, while [Richard discussed covering the dispute for the Guardian](#).

You can also [learn more about the GCHQ ban and campaign by looking at our timeline](#) of how it started, what happened and when.