



**An Chartlann Náisiúnta**  
**National Archives**

**Reference Code:** 2019/101/2216

**Creator(s):** Department of Foreign Affairs

**Accession Conditions:** Open

**Copyright:** National Archives, Ireland.  
May only be reproduced with  
the written permission of the  
Director of the National  
Archives.

Botschaft von Irland  
Embassy of Ireland  
Godesberger Allee 119  
5300 Bonn 2  
Tel. (0228) 37 69 37

case 1.3

FAX 37 35 00

-----

No. 275/89

To : Hq., Attn.: M. Forbes, Press Section  
C.C. J. Dillon, Anglo Irish  
From : T. Bolster, Embassy Bonn

Date : 15. September 1989

Total number of pages (including this one) : 4

Subject : Stern Interview with IRA Spokesman

STERN (mass circulation - 1.4 million - weekly magazine) carries one-page interview in yesterday's (14.9) issue with IRA spokesman. It was mentioned on a number of TV and Radio news broadcasts that this interview was going to appear and therefore it is likely to be widely read. My hasty translation of all text and original are on following pages.

Key phrase is in first sentence where further IRA attacks in FRG are announced.

Translation of "Stern" interview with IRA, 14 September edition 1989

Terror

"In every War there are civilian Casualties"

Interview with the IRA Chief responsible for overseas activities, who announces new attacks in the FRG.

Stern: The IRA shot the German wife of a British soldier in Unna. What has that to do with the liberation of Northern Ireland?

Sean (fictitious name): The killing of a German citizen certainly damages our image. It was not our intention to kill the wife of a soldier. Our action unit acted in the belief that a member of the "Women's Royal Army Corps" was involved, a unit which is stationed in Dortmund. It does not serve our aims to be in conflict with the Germans, the Dutch or the Belgians. But we have no other choice. In order to make clearly known what is going on in the occupied part of Ireland, we have decided to attack the British wherever they may be.

Stern: Again and again IRA actions have caused civilian casualties. And repeatedly it is stated that this is a mistake, that civilian casualties will be avoided in the future. Until the next time.

Sean: I can only repeat that we regret this. But it is a fact that civilian casualties occur in every war.

Stern: That sounds pretty cold blooded.

Sean: That is the tragedy of war. The British intentionally include civilian casualties in the calculations of the overall way they conduct war. For us that is an accident. We pay for it with our image.

Stern: You emphasize that you are fighting for a just cause. But what distinguishes your means from those of your opponents?

Sean: We don't use the same means at all. In the last year we called off twenty attacks in Germany because they would have had to be carried out too close to civilians. Instead of this, volunteers then at great risk penetrated British barracks and set bombs.

Stern: The pitiless Northern-Ireland conflict is hardly now understandable in view of the unification of Europe. In 1993 the borders will disappear. Are you not attached to an outdated nationalism?

Sean: No. We are fighting for peace and justice. We want to

2

bring about national democracy in all of Ireland. The British government has already said that 1993 does not mean the end of Partition. The fact is that the British once again last Thursday blew up a link road to the South. I am sure that people in West Germany would also fight like us were they oppressed as we are.

Stern: Are there then links with the RAF (Rote Armee Fraktion) as has been repeatedly claimed?

Sean: No. The RAF does not represent the people and is not a movement. The IRA in contrast is part of a long tradition. It is fully supported by the oppressed Nationalists in the North of Ireland, where also most fighting takes place.

Stern: In spite of that the Northern Ireland people do not decide whether the armed struggle will continue. The IRA cadres decide that.

Sean: First of all there is unity among our supporters on the necessity of the armed struggle. And the IRA has no difficulty in getting new recruits. We have been fighting for 20 years and we are still fresh.

Stern: There is a growing tendency world wide to negotiate rather than to fight. When will you start?

Sean: We tried to. The British government has negotiated with us but it twice broke the ceasefire. We want to talk now. We have asked the British government to explain why they deny the Irish people the right to decide itself on its future.

Stern: According to a "Sunday Times" report the strategy of the armed struggle is contested inside your organization.

Sean: Nonsense. The "Sunday Times" is a mouthpiece of the British government. Murdoch its owner is a personal friend of Maggie Thatcher. That alone explains why they write such rubbish.

Stern: Under what conditions and when can this struggle be ended?

Sean: It could end today. We could recall our "volunteers" from England, the Continent and the Federal Republic, if the British government declares that it will withdraw its troops from Ireland in a foreseeable time. We want a national democracy which will naturally provide the same rights for the Protestant Unionists. Equality for everybody.

Stern: It is hardly to be expected that Mrs. Thatcher will agree

3

to that - so further IRA attacks in the FRG?

Sean: Yes. I am sorry. The British soldiers think that they can come to us here in Belfast and Derry and kill us and torture us and then travel back to Germany to recuperate. They will however hear from us everywhere.

Interview conducted by Stern staff member Warner Poolchau.