

The Dynamiters

In the 1880s a New York-based faction of militant Irish nationalists conducted the first urban bombing campaign in history, targeting symbolic public buildings in Britain with homemade bombs. This book investigates the people and ideas behind this spectacular new departure in revolutionary violence. Employing a transnational approach, the book reveals connections and parallels between the 'Dynamiters' and other revolutionary groups active at the time, and demonstrates how they interacted with currents in revolution, war and politics across Europe, the United States and the British empire. Reconstructing the life stories of individual Dynamiters, and their conceptual and ethical views on violence, it offers an innovative picture of the dynamics of revolutionary organisations as well as the political, social and cultural factors which move people to support or condemn political acts of violence.

NIALL WHELEHAN is an IRCHSS Fellow at the Moore Institute, National University of Ireland, Galway.

The Dynamiters

*Irish Nationalism and Political Violence
in the Wider World, 1867–1900*

Niall Whelehan



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To Eli

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Chronology, 1867–1900

- 1867 5 March. IRB attempt insurrection in Ireland.
 7 May. Dynamite patented by Alfred Nobel.
 20 June. Clan-na-Gael founded in New York.
 23 November. Public execution of three Fenians in
 Manchester.
 13 December. Explosion at Clerkenwell prison kills twelve
 people.
- 1871 17 January. Amnestied Fenian prisoners, the ‘Cuba Five’,
 arrive in New York.
- 1874 10 October. Article calling for an urban guerrilla war
 published in *The Irish World*.
- 1876 4 March. Skirmishing Fund launched in *The Irish World*.
- 1877 21 June. Executions of six Molly Maguires in Pennsylvania.
 14 July. Great Railroad Strike begins in West Virginia.
- 1879 21 October. The Irish National Land League founded in
 Mayo.
- 1881 14 January. Explosion at Salford Barracks causes one death.
 13 March. Assassination of Tsar Alexander II.
 16 March. Explosive device found at the Mansion House,
 London.
 10 June. Attempted bomb attack at Liverpool Town Hall.
 14–20 July. Anti-authoritarian (Anarchist) Congress in
 London, where delegates debate propaganda of the deed.
- 1882 26 March. Bomb attack at Weston House, Galway.
 6 May. The Phoenix Park assassinations.
- 1883 20 January. Three explosions in Glasgow.
 15 March. Explosions at the Local Government Board Offices
 and *The Times*’ offices in London.

- xiv Chronology, 1867–1900
- 4–5 April. The ‘Gallagher Team’ arrested in London and Birmingham.
- 29 July. Patrick O’Donnell kills James Carey off the coast of South Africa.
- 1884 30 October. Two explosions on the London Underground.
 25–6 February. Explosion at Victoria Railway Station and bombs discovered at three London Underground stations.
 30 May. Explosions at Scotland Yard, the Carlton Club and residence of Watkin Wynn, London.
 13 December. Explosion under London Bridge. Three bombers blow themselves up but no other injuries.
- 1885 2 January. Explosion on London Underground.
 24 January. Explosions at House of Commons, Tower of London and Westminster Hall.
- 1886 4 May. Bomb thrown during demonstration in Haymarket Square, Chicago.
- 1887 Plot to attack the Queen’s Jubilee celebrations in London organised by agents provocateurs.
- 1891 26 October. Explosive device thrown into The National Press office in Dublin.
 31 December. Explosion in a cellar of Dublin Castle.
- 1892 11 and 27 March. Two bomb attacks attributed to Ravachol in France.
 25 April. Théodule Meunier bombs the restaurant where Ravachol was arrested, killing two people.
 23 July. Attempted assassination of Henry Clay Frick by Alexander Berkman during the Homestead strike, Pennsylvania.
 24 December. Explosion at Dublin Castle which kills one constable.
- 1893 6 May. Explosion at Dublin Four Courts.
 7 November. Santiago Salvador throws an Orsini bomb into Barcelona’s Teatro Liceo, killing twenty-two people.
 25 November. Small explosion at an army barracks, Dublin.
 9 December. Auguste Vaillant throws a bomb into the lower house of the French parliament.
- 1894 12 February. Emile Henry explodes a bomb in a train-station café in Paris.
 24 May. Sante Caserio assassinates the French president, Sadi Carnot.

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- 1896 12 September. Irish nationalists arrested in Glasgow, Boulogne and Rotterdam for planned bomb attack.
- 1897 8 August. Michele Angiolillo assassinates Antonio Canovas, Spanish Prime Minister.
- 1898 10 September. Empress Elizabeth of Austria assassinated by Luigi Luccheni.
- 1900 21 April. Explosion at a dam in Thorold, Ontario near US border.
- 29 July. Gaetano Bresci assassinates Umberto I, king of Italy.

Abbreviations

CBS	Crime Branch Special
CSORP	Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers
CUA	American Catholic History Research Center and University Archives, Washington, DC
DMP	Dublin Metropolitan Police
DRP	Desmond Ryan Papers
<i>Dynamite Monthly</i>	<i>Ireland's Liberator and Dynamite Monthly</i>
HHC	<i>Hansard</i> , House of Commons debates
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
MCIHP	Maloney Collection of Irish Historical Papers
NAI	National Archives of Ireland
NLI	National Library of Ireland
NYMA	New York Municipal Archive
NYPL	New York Public Library
ODRPP	O'Donovan Rossa Personal Papers
PCR	Police and Crime Records
PRO	Public Record Office
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
TNA	The National Archives of the United Kingdom
SSD	Secret Service Division
UCDA	University College Dublin Archives