

Curriculum links: Politics and society in Northern Ireland, 1949-1993 - Civil rights movement
Key personality: Bernadette Devlin

RTÉ Archives, Online exhibition: Violence in Northern Ireland 1969 - Bernadette Devlin

Access the online exhibition [here](#).

Bernadette Devlin was born in Cookstown, Co. Tyrone in 1947 to a Catholic family. While a student at Queen's University, Belfast she became active in left wing politics and the civil rights movement. In April 1969 she was elected as MP for mid-Ulster in a by-election. She stood for Independent Unity and was running against Anna Forrest of the Unionist Party, who was the widow of former MP George Forrest. She was the youngest woman ever elected to Westminster.

Activity 1



Listen to the audio clip 'Bernadette Devlin addresses supporters' (1969). Use the space below to make notes on the key points made by Devlin:

Share your notes with the person beside you or small group. Based on your notes, can you identify at least **three** political beliefs of Bernadette Devlin?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Activity 2



Watch the video clip 'Bernadette Devlin votes' (1969).

Class discussion: What evidence is there in the clip to support the view that Bernadette Devlin was a remarkable political activist?

Activity 3

Listen to the audio clip "Most extraordinary politician of the year" (1969) and answer the following questions.

1. Write down at least **two** pieces of information about the background to Bernadette Devlin's election as MP for mid-Ulster in April 1969.

2. Why did the Home Secretary James O'Callaghan criticise Devlin's maiden speech in the House of Commons?

3. How did Devlin respond to his criticism?
