

# Race Riot Hits Second Town In the North Of England

By SARAH LYALL

LONDON, June 25 — After a weekend of violent confrontations that involved white and Asian youths and the police in Burnley, a town not far from the racially motivated riots last month in Oldham, British officials said today that they were trying to decide whether the incidents were linked and what to do to prevent further unrest.

The government is seeking advice "about any common elements in the disturbances of recent weeks," a Home Office minister, John Denham, told the House of Commons today. Apparently in a reference to the influence of the British National Party, a white supremacist group that has long had a foothold in Burnley and that won 11.3 percent of the Parliamentary vote there in the recent election, Mr. Denham added, "The whole House will condemn the activities of racist organizations and those who are racially motivated."

Burnley, with a population of 92,000 people, 6,000 of whom are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin, is 20 miles from Oldham in the depressed industrial north. According to a spokesman for the Commission on Racial Equality, which monitors race relations in Britain, the two outbreaks of unrest were most likely caused by a number of common factors.

"It isn't as if it's the same person saying, 'We did Oldham — let's do Burnley,'" the spokesman, Chris Myant, said. "But some of the same factors are there. There's clearly a problem of white racism. Also, we have to look at the generational cleavages within the Asian community. Prominent Asian politicians in Burnley who hold council positions

and so on, as in Oldham, don't have the trust of the younger people."

With unemployment high in both Oldham and Burnley, Mr. Myant said, white and Asian youths feel frustrated and disenfranchised. "The white communities feel they don't have a voice," he said, "and the young Asians feel they don't have a voice, unless they turn to racism or throwing stones."

The mayhem in Burnley began late on Friday night with apparently unrelated incidents, including a fight outside a nightclub by a group of Asian youths. At the same time, an argument between a group of white youths and a group of Asians over complaints that the whites were making too much noise at a party grew, resulting in damage to nine cars that belonged to both Asians and whites by the white youths, the police said.

In a third incident, a group of white men attacked an off-duty Asian taxicab driver, the police said. Two whites were arrested in connection with that attack, which left the cabdriver with a broken cheekbone.

Pockets of violence, apparently caused by a desire for revenge between the whites and the Asians, broke out again late Saturday night. Groups of young men gathered on street corners, tussled with one another, threw stones at the police and at passing cars and damaged a pub.

Sporadic problems recurred throughout the day on Sunday. Then, about 7:30 that evening, the police said, 70 white youths left a pub en masse and challenged a group of Asian youths in Stoneyholme, a predominantly Asian neighborhood. In the ensuing melee, the youths set fire to cars, a pub and a store, and threw stones and firebombs at the police. In all, the authorities said, 11 people, eight of them white, were arrested on charges that included criminal damage, wounding and public order offenses.

Asians in Burnley said that the town had generally enjoyed good race relations and that the unrest had been set off by the British National Party, which campaigned there before the election on June 7. Speaking on BBC radio this morning, Deputy Mayor Rafique Malik, whose heritage is Asian, said that it would be a mistake to conclude that Burnley was too similar to Oldham.

"Generally speaking, the communities in Burnley are very peaceful and nonracist," Mr. Malik said. "As far as Burnley's various communities are concerned, they can only condemn the violence and arson that has gone on."



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Burnley is 20 miles from Oldham, scene of racial melees last month.