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# What happens when the

SO the fairy tale reached its appointed happy ending — and undoubtedly President Mandela's inauguration was an extraordinary and cheering occasion. Nevertheless this historic moment should not be allowed to go by without comment on the quite astonishingly distorted version of events in South Africa we have been given over the past few weeks by the BBC.

So infatuated were Jeremy Paxman and the rest of the army of BBC commentators with the ANC, as the shining heroes of the fairy tale, that their reporting was influenced by this in almost every significant respect.

They did not explain, for instance, that one reason why the elections went off so peacefully was that, with victory at last in sight, ANC supporters stepped down their 10-year-long campaign of violence against their black rivals, notably Inkatha.

Nor did they ever explain how chaos was averted by the almost miraculous way the elections managed in the end to reflect that fundamental reality of South Africa, the extent to which it is made up of minorities. The whites, Zulus, coloureds and Indians won just enough of a presence to prevent

that ANC monopoly of power which would have been fatal.

The original BBC version — once they ceased to hate the National Party when it began collaborating with the ANC and turned to demonising Chief Buthelezi instead — was that Buthelezi did not want to take part in the elections because he knew Inkatha would be wiped out.

When at the last minute, having won some of the "federal" concessions he always wanted, Buthelezi agreed to participate, this was represented by the BBC as a "climb-down".

When Inkatha got more than twice as many votes in Natal as the BBC had predicted, this was presented as being due to vote-rigging and intimidation. ANC claims of Inkatha vote-rigging were given the lead in BBC news bulletins. When Inkatha produced evidence of ANC vote-rigging, Paxman and Co brushed it aside.

In fact independent sources in South Africa now confirm that by far the most extensive vote-rigging came from the ANC — and that, given more time to prepare, Inkatha's vote in Natal might have been nearer 70 per cent instead of 50 per cent.

The BBC never informed us that 90 per cent of the field staff of the

Independent Electoral Commission, supervising the elections, were members or appointees of the ANC — any more than it has drawn attention to the fact that 10 of the 49 ANC members of President Mandela's new Cabinet are or have been members of the South African Communist Party, including the ministers in charge of the police, the defence force and justice.

What they are also not preparing us for is the inevitable trouble which lies ahead, when the honeymoon is over and the ANC government is unable to meet the wildly inflated expectations of many of its supporters. To fulfil even their minimum pledges, economists calculate, would require a growth rate in the first year of a staggering 9 per cent. But no doubt when trouble begins from the more impatient ANC and PAC extremists, the BBC will still somehow find a way to blame it all on whites reluctant to give up their privileges — and of course on poor old Chief Buthelezi.

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O.V. AsP (initials)

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## honeymoon ends?



## HERALD COMMENT

### Are Indians sufficiently involved?

Minority Front leader Amichand Rajbansi has tackled both the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party for including too few Indian politicians in their dispensing of political patronage.

To the NP, Mr Rajbansi says that in spite of making a massive appeal to the Indian community and the fact that the party won huge support from the community in the recent election, only a handful of Indians were elected to Parliament and the regional assembly on the NP ticket.

To the IFP, Mr Rajbansi says that although the party won only a tiny percentage of the Indian vote, it lost a golden opportunity to make KwaZulu-Natal's cabinet more representative by failing to appoint a single Indian minister.

Well, Mr Rajbansi is certainly living up to his campaign promise of fighting for the rights of minorities, specifically the Indian community, so we cannot fault him on that. But looked at as a whole, the Indian community has done extraordinarily well out of these elections. Indian members of the ANC hold major offices of state in Mr Mandela's cabinet while both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker elected unanimously by the new Parliament are of Indian extract.

It is ironic that the whites in KwaZulu-Natal deserted the NP to vote in favour of the IFP while the Indian community voted heavily in favour of the Nats. The IFP has wound up with quite a high number of whites in its ranks in Parliament and the provincial assembly, reflecting its support base, while the Nats remain a party dominated by white, male Afrikaners.

In fairness to the IFP, it has never attracted significant overt support from the Indian community. In part, that may be the consequence of historic tensions between the Zulu and Indian peoples. Like any other political party, its public representatives are just that — representative of its supporters. Very few Indian politicians identified with the IFP before the election.

Still, Mr Rajbansi does have a grain of an idea. The Indian community has demonstrated that it is pivotal in KwaZulu-Natal and its leaders have a valuable contribution to make in government. There is no reason why in the post-apartheid South Africa all the political parties should not become fully representative of the population as a whole, grouping themselves on the basis of ideology and not race.

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