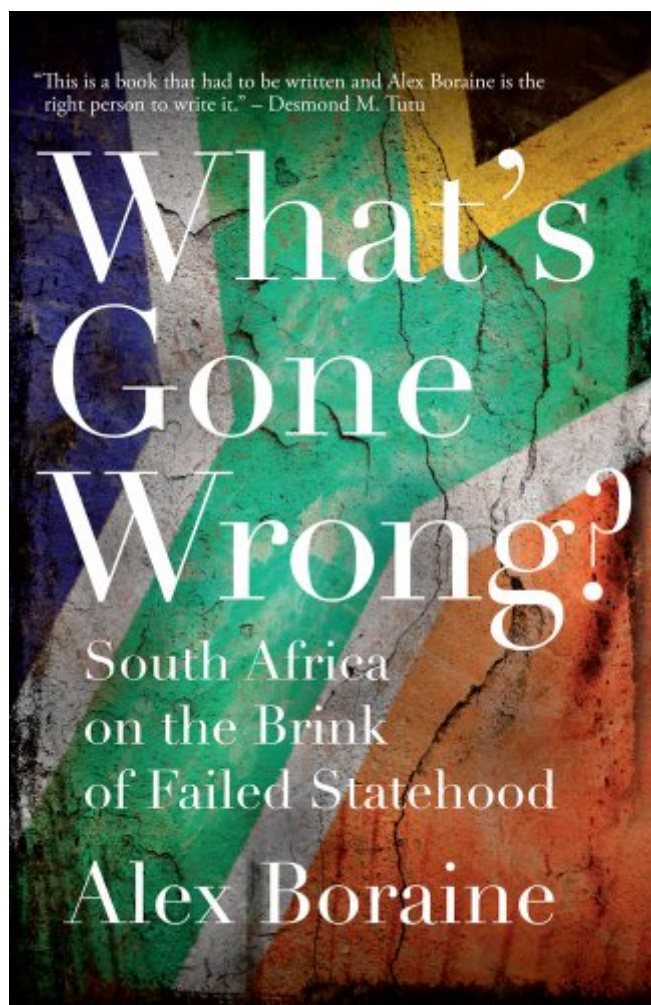


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What's Gone Wrong?: South Africa On The Brink Of Failed Statehood



Synopsis

This is the book that Alex Boraine never wanted to write. As a native South African and a witness to the worst years of apartheid, he has known many of the leaders of the African National Congress in exile. He shared the jubilation of millions of South Africans when the ANC won the first democratic elections in 1994 and took up the reins of government under the presidency of Nelson Mandela. Now, two decades later, he is forced to wonder what exactly has gone wrong in South Africa. Intolerance and corruption are the hallmarks of the governing party, while the worsening state of education, health, safety and security and employment strengthen the claim that South Africa is a failing state. Boraine explores this urgent and critical issue from the vantage point of wide experience as a minister, parliamentarian, co-founder of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA) and Vice Chairperson of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Committee. He digs deep into the history of the ANC and concludes that both in exile and today, the ANC is slavishly committed to one party as the dominant ruling factor. All else – the Executive, Parliament, the Judiciary, civil society and the media – take second and third place. The ANC, Boraine claims, seeks to control every institution. *What's Gone Wrong?* pulls no punches, but it also goes beyond strong criticism and offers a number of constructive proposals, including the re-alignment of politics as a way of preventing South Africa becoming a failed state. As South Africa mourns the loss of Mandela and embarks on another national election, with the ANC likely to begin a third decade of rule, this incisive, detailed critique is required reading for all who are interested in the fate of this young nation.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Alex Boraine's name has been synonymous with integrity in South African politics and recent history. That makes the warning bell he rings all the more alarming. For those of us who went through school during the apartheid years and received censored history lessons, his book fills the educational gap by providing a thorough and well written history of the ANC and South Africa's transition to democracy. Understanding how we got to where we are now helps us to see where we're going wrong and how we may be able to change direction.

Very balanced and captures the essence of South Africa's social and political climate.

The book came in good condition as stated, and in time. Since I haven't read the book yet, that's all I can say for now. Alex Boraine, though, who is the author, was one of the two Afrikaaners on the So. African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC.) He was a moderate. The conservative Afrikaaner, a member of the racist National Party, eventually resigned. Boraine was the Deputy Chair of the Commission, Archbishop Desmond Tutu being the chair and guiding light. There is an excellent tome on the TRC by Antjie Krog, a journalist with the South African Broadcasting Corp., which I've recently finished, and I can't wait to begin Boraine's book. Once I'm done with it, there'll most assuredly be more to say.

What's Gone Wrong BESIDES the socialism and the revenge government, you mean? South Africa is experiencing the predictable consequences of the ANC policies. This book focuses more on the good intentions and then back story, but it's not very specific when it comes to assigning blame for the disappointment in South Africa. Socialism doesn't work. It ends in famine and death squads. It's completely predictable.

Alex Boraine is a sensitive and credible observer of South African politics and society. He belonged to the parliamentary opposition under Apartheid, voted for the ANC in 1994, and served on the Truth

and Reconciliation Commission with Desmond Tutu. If a man like Boraine is worried that the rot in the ANC is jeopardizing the outlook for constitutional democracy in South Africa, then everyone should take notice. "What's Gone Wrong" is a short book that highlights some of the key problems facing contemporary South Africa, in particular the corruption and arrogance that have marred ANC rule. I liked the book, but I'd be the first to admit that it is thin and ephemeral, more like "think piece" journalism or editorial commentary than real scholarship. Parts of it are already dated (it was written in 2012/13), and it's hard to see why a respected university press would publish it. American readers should also know that the book is a reprint of a book published in South Africa and is full of unexplained references to South African leaders and organizations that will be incomprehensible to Americans. Even the South African spellings (e.g., "labour" instead of "labor") are retained!

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