

Dear Jonny Steinberg;

October 6, 2002

I write to congratulate you on your outstanding book, quite the best post-apartheid analysis that I have read.

I enclose a C.V., just to show "where I am coming from". I am a social anthropologist (long retired from academia), and I particularly admire the adroit and masterly way that you interpreted the conflicting views of the white farmers, and, poignantly, of the African tenants. I have been interested in such mutual misunderstandings in different contexts, and I do know how difficult it is to understand and analyse them as effectively as you have done. Many anthropologists would benefit from reading your book.

I admit that at first I was dubious about your "Dear reader" approach.. I will explain later what this means ...", etc. But it works, it adds to the dramatic tension. I also liked your honesty in describing the mistakes you made, the pointers you missed, the wrong paths taken. And, very important, you write so well.

This could not have been an easy book to write, but you have succeeded admirably. I was glad to read perceptive and enthusiastic reviews in the Cape Times and Mail & Guardian.

I do hope that my letter does not seem patronising: I greatly admire your splendid achievement.

Yours sincerely,

03/01/24