Roberts did tolerate censorship

RONALD Suresh Roberts's claim in his letter "I would not have tolerated censorship from Pahad" (January 27) that he merely "invited comments" from him about *Fit to Govern*, and that he "cut nothing at anybody's 'insistence' " is demonstrably untrue.

It's clear from the peremptory tone of Pahad's demand for deletions, e-mailed by his chief director Louis du Plooy — "The following are Minister Pahad's comments on the most recent version of the book. He has repeated some of the comments and would now like to urge, in the strongest terms, that the following be addressed immediately" — that Pahad's insistent "comments" were orders.

Roberts's claim that he deleted his criticisms of the Oppenheimers to "distinguish" his "strong views from the President's almost-as-strong views on that dynasty" is plainly false too.

Mbeki never communicated his thinking about the Oppenheimers to Roberts, either in his February 2001 letter to him about the book project or at any other time. Consequently, Roberts has no basis for his presumptuous statement that he holds stronger views about the role of the Oppenheimer family in South Africa's history than Mbeki does.

Mbeki had nothing to do with the Oppenheimer cuts. They were made because Pahad wanted them made. Someone should ask him why.

— Anthony Brink, Cape Town