

## YOUNG HISTORIANS' CONFERENCE 1996



*Michael de Souza of St. John's College being presented with the first prize by the adjudicator and well-known South African historian, Rodney Davenport.*

The annual Young Historians' Conference could not rightly be called a national conference this year, as only two provinces participated, namely Gauteng and the Western Cape. However, we are happy to say that the conference is alive and well and serving its original important purpose, which is to stimulate a keener interest in history at high school level as well as to provide an opportunity for pupils to display and appreciate their own historical scholarship.

The competition was held in the form of a round robin in both provinces, with the finalists of each province competing in the Final Round at Rhenish Girls' High School on 20/21 September. Besides the excitement of the competition, pupils enjoyed the social interaction, as well as the entertainment and outings organized for the one-and-a-half day conference.

For the uninitiated, each conference takes the form of a series of talks or presentations, the subject matter of which must be selected from the prescribed themes for each standard. Each pupil is obliged to do his/her own research and preparation. The structure, content, conclusions and presentations have to be their own work. We found that the standard of the talks was extremely high throughout. Adjudicators expressed surprise at the erudition and academic prowess of the delegates. Gone are the days when pupils read their talks from pieces of paper; they now deliver their presentations seemingly with ease, using audio-visual equipment to extend their talks, which covered a very wide variety of themes and topics. The finalists, with the winners in each category listed first, second and third, are as follows:

### Standard Ten:

1. Michael de Souza (St. John's College): **The Use and Abuse of Power: an examination of the SADF in recent years.**
2. Guy Morgan (Rondebosh Boys' High School): **The Power Merchants of Venice.**
3. Tammy Roodt (Holy Cross Convent): **Was Steve Biko's Fate the result of an abuse of power?**
4. Kelly Phelps (Herzlia): **Was Eva Peron entirely responsible for the downfall of the Peronist Regime?**
5. Candice Moore (Sir John Adamson High): **Has Fidel Castro used his power for the upliftment of his people or has he abused it to their detriment?**

### Standard Nine:

1. Anna Gagiano (Rhenish Girls' High School): **Apartheid and Social Darwinism — Birds of the same Feather?**
2. Chantal MacGowan (Holy Cross Convent): **Feminism.**



3. Simon Sierra (Bryanston High School): **Nationalism.**
4. Samantha Solomons (Rustenburg Girls' High School): **Tsarism/Communism. Two sides of the same coin?**
5. Christine Laidlaw (Bryanston High): **Feminism.**

**Standard Eight:**

1. Lenelle Foster (Rhenish Girls' High School): **The Warsaw Ghetto Revolt: how did reaction, counter-reaction and non-reaction aggravate it?**
2. Emmerentia Erasmus (Rhenish Girls' High School): **The 1968 Student Revolts in France.**

3. Lerato Setlaelo (Holy Rosary, Edenvale): **The Hungarian Revolution.**
4. Richard Stacey (St. John's College): **Chechnya: Revolution or not?**
5. Sarah Johnson (Rustenburg Girls' High): **The French Revolution: Danton and Robespierre succumbed to absolute corruption.**

Hopefully, more schools (first-timers that is) will participate next year, especially in the Boland, where participation is sluggish. A good suggestion is to hold your first round in your classroom with **everyone** participating for a term mark, since the emphasis is on course work in the new syllabus. Pupils soon get caught up in the excitement of the competition. We hope to see you at the **Young Historians' Conference** next year!



Informal discussions is a hallmark of the Young historians Conference