

**POST-INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE'S NEW 'O' LEVEL HISTORY
SYLLABUS 2166: A CRISIS OF EXPECTATIONS**

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ABSTRACT

This study is a qualitative, retrospective analysis of the new 'O' Level Zimbabwe History Syllabus 2166, whose checkered-history culminated in its replacement, in 2002, by the Syllabus 2167. It examined the innovation process associated with the formulation, development and implementation of this curriculum change project, with a view to determining the problems, which bedevilled its successful operationalization in the secondary schools. To that end, the research established that the History Syllabus 2166 was formulated against the background of Zimbabwe's transition from Capitalism to Socialism. Designed with a socialist ideological framework, the new syllabus was initially meant to facilitate this transition.

Due to the political significance of the syllabus, the government wanted the implementation process carried out urgently. Consequently, the architects of the syllabus had very little time to consult widely with the relevant stakeholders during the period of formulation. There had been no pilot testing, or prior preparations made, in the production and distribution of adequate, relevant teaching and learning materials. The syllabus was just pre-maturely introduced into the schools, where the majority of the unprepared history teachers were required to implement it. Hence the failure to assert its rightful position in the school curriculum. The study concludes that Zimbabwe's attempt to change her secondary school history curriculum was at best unsystematic, albeit radical, at worst contradictory.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT FOR THE INNOVATIVE ‘O’ LEVEL HISTORY SYLLABUS 2166.

One of the most dramatic cases of curriculum contestation in the post-independence Zimbabwe is linked to the now defunct Ordinary Level History Syllabus 2166. The process of initiating the syllabus, which began in 1984, resulted in its approval and subsequent implementation in the year 1990. Following the attainment of political independence in 1980, many Zimbabwean historians and teachers felt that radical changes were required in the content, teaching and learning methodology, and the assessment of history which, hitherto, had served to sustain the interests of the colonial masters. In line with the government’s stated ideological stance then, Marxism-Leninism, the school curricular subject of history was considered a vital instrument for political awareness. It provided a critical arena in which the ideology of the state was to be both projected and contested. From the standpoint of policy makers, history was at the cutting edge of the process of politicising the curriculum content; and its position as a school subject was in part justified on this basis. Muronda, in Chitate (1998) concurs. The new History Syllabus 2166 was an integral part of the liberation process whose origin dates back to the days of the armed struggle. It was an extension of the Zimbabwe African National Union’s (ZANU) education programme, which sought to capture the soul, consciousness and identity of the African people. Designed with a

heavy dosage of socialist codes, ideology and doctrine, the new syllabus was to be used as a blueprint for other syllabi formations and formats. The ultimate objective was to replace capitalism in language and in writing with socialism.

The syllabus was designed with a materialist methodology and interpretation of history. It, therefore, presented history as a product of class struggle and sought to analyse it in the context of Karl Marx's socio-economic stages of development, notably Primitive Communalism, Slavery, Feudalism, Capitalism, Socialism and Communism. A dialectical analysis of the production relations, operating at each of these stages, was to feature as a distinct element of the syllabus. Perhaps, the single most innovative aspect of the new syllabus was its skills approach. In giving overt priority to skills objectives, the founders of the History Syllabus 2166 joined in the bandwagon of the 'new' history movement which, according to Harvey, Maxwell and Wilson (1996:77) propounds the view that school history curricula should be designed "... to improve students skills and abilities, rather than just the mastery of historical content." The emphasis on skills development, it was hoped, would result in the development of the critical faculty among students, which would enable them to weigh evidence, detect bias, distinguish between fact and opinion, and draw reasoned conclusions. To this end, pupils had to be exposed to a broad spectrum of resources ranging from primary to secondary sources.

Special value was placed on the use of primary evidence. This was in accordance with the advice proffered by Garvey and Krug (1977:39):

To let pupils examine primary evidence... is to allow them to practise, in an elementary way, the skills that the historian has to use. It is to teach the structure of the subject by making pupils act within it.

Finally, the format of the final examination of the syllabus was structured in such a way that it allowed the testing of skills (in Paper 1) and content (in Paper 2). This was a deliberate arrangement informed by theory. With this background, a selective review of literature on the nature of history, as a school discipline, is duly made to highlight the theoretical genesis of the new History Syllabus 2166.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE 'NEW' HISTORY.

There appears to be basically two divergent epistemological positions, which have strongly influenced history curriculum development, particularly at the secondary school level. It has not been uncommon to conceptualise history as: a body of knowledge, product and 'knowledge that', or a form of knowledge, process and 'knowledge how'. The old history, euphemistically understood as 'traditional' history, is associated with the former and the 'new' history, in vogue, with the latter.

HISTORY AS A BODY OF KNOWLEDGE.

The established tradition of history teaching, which came under serious scrutiny in the late sixties, rested on a conceptual footing built of the view that school history is nothing but a body of knowledge transmissible to the learners. Accordingly, knowledge of the facts of history was accorded the pride of place, on the list of experiences deemed crucial for the education of children. Identified by Seixas (1993:237) as “the historical canon”, the statutory facts of significant dates, events, places and great names featured as the salient attendant elements of historical literacy; the bedrock of social and cultural education (Chaffer, 1973). Hailed as an information subject, history was, therefore, justified as one of the core-components of the traditional school curriculum.

Philosophically, traditional historians believed that the past was knowable. In their scheme of things, a deliberate adherence to critical standards and methods of historical scholarship yielded what was viewed as valid data expressive of past reality. Hence, its objective and reified status. Paul, in Taruvinga (1997) agrees. Historians of the old school laid stress on the independence of knowledge and its existence outside the consciousness of the knower. Pedagogically, the role of the teacher was, thus clear; to impart “valued, traditionally tried and tested knowledge” to pupils (Silock, 1999:27). Far from being a repository of knowledge, the teacher was merely its medium. Through

the didactic methods involving lectures, note-giving and inordinate reliance on textbooks, historical facts found their way into the passive minds of the learners. Consequently, assessment gave primacy to content mastery. Pupils who demonstrated ability to recall and regurgitate a corpus of learned facts in examinations were praised to the skies. This was a mark of academic excellence for, in the words of an educational satirist; in Sylvester (1994) history is not what one thinks, but what one remembers. However, progressive historians beg to differ. In their opinion, real history engenders critical thinking and not simply the absorption and reproduction of certified facts. This is the hallmark of the 'new' history, in currency since the 1970s. Its architects see school history as a form rather than a body of knowledge.

HISTORY AS A FORM OF KNOWLEDGE.

According to Medley and White, in Bourdillon (1994:219):

History is a distinct form of knowledge with its own evidence, procedures for generating its content and its organising concepts for rendering the content intelligible and significant.

In a complete reversal of emphasis, historical method is given priority over content.

The rationale for the change in approach is the conviction that history is a discipline

essentially concerned with evidence processing. Its subject, the past, cannot be directly observed repeating itself. It is only accessible to historians by means of a painstaking examination of its evidential remains. “The method of investigation is [, therefore,] important to history as experiment is to natural science” (Herne, 1980:1). But, the experimental results of natural science are more objective and credible than those of historical investigation. Historical knowledge is subjective, fluid and provisional. There are no absolute historical truths. The past is perpetually recreated in the light of the discovery of new evidence. For this reason, today’s orthodox is tomorrow’s heresy.

It is against this backdrop that the ‘new’ historians have enjoyed print visibility. They have more regard for enquiry skills than factual knowledge. Wake’s declaration in Dickinson, Gard and Lee (1978:2) that “there are no historical facts, only evidence” serves to buttress their position. And again, Fines’ (1994:22) dictum “Evidence: The basis of the discipline”, adds weight to the force of their argument. As a result, the ‘new’ history curriculum is designed to promote source study. Pupils are required to mirror the image of professional historians when handling primary and secondary sources, the bread and butter of history. In the end, the goal is to develop thinking skills so vital to the study and understanding of the discipline.

Refuting Piaget's findings, in Husbands (1996), confirmed by Hallam (1970), that most secondary school pupils lacked the mental equipment to engage in abstract, skills-based history, the 'new' historians insist such a curriculum is within their capacity. They think and are not intellectually tabula rasa. Recent research supports their claims: "Pupils can use historical evidence to develop and test hypotheses about the past provided such evidence is presented to them appropriately" (Husbands, 1996:15). Thus, by implication, genuine history is not a preserve of academic historians as is alleged by Elton (1970). Young students, as proto-historians, can do it. Bruner's thesis, in Bourdillon (1994:219) is instructive:

Intellectual activity everywhere is the same, whether at the frontier of knowledge or in a third grade – classroom. The difference is in degree, not in kind.

Nevertheless, the present posture of academic opinion rejects as spurious the apparent polarity between historical knowledge and skills. The pendulum shift from factual to evidential history represents a serious epistemological error in the conception of the true nature of the subject. It is neither the sum total of its facts nor the skills it develops in those committed to its study, but a combination of knowledge, understanding and skills. Nichol (1984:14) endorses the idea:

An academic discipline consists of three intermeshed kinds of knowledge: propositional (know that), procedural (know how) and conceptual (organisational). For history, propositional (know that) knowledge is the body of information that historians produce on a topic – their finished products. In schools it is the kind of information that is enshrined in countless textbooks, and is handed to pupils as a received body of knowledge, the facts of history. Procedural (know how) knowledge is how historians reach their conclusions – the process of enquiry that results in know that. Know how knowledge is concerned with the whole range of activities by which historians find out about the past. Conceptual knowledge involves the concepts which historians use to organise both their know how and know that knowledge.

The immediate implication of such a holistic view of history for classroom pedagogy is clear to Nichol (op.cit. p.14) “The teacher should be as concerned with the process of enquiry as with the transmission of knowledge.” Historical knowledge and skills are two sides of the same coin and should be handled as mutually inclusive. Any treatment otherwise is vacuous. Gay (1975:189) sharply shows the connection: “Historical narration without analysis is trivial, historical analysis without narration is incomplete.” The case for integrated history is also advanced by the National Curriculum History Working Group, (1990: xii) which considers knowledge, understanding and skills as “indissolubly bound together.” A thorough grounding in historical knowledge is prerequisite to the development of skills. When practised, they promote understanding;

a priceless goal of real history. The School Examinations and Assessment Council (1990: xii) make a graphic summary:

In history knowledge necessarily underpins our understanding and our ability to make sense of the historical records and is itself enhanced by the development of our understanding and growing proficiency in historical skills.

It is this strong epistemological commitment to the teaching of content and development of skills that had a bearing on the new 'O' Level Zimbabwe History Syllabus 2166. It sought to promote the skilful handling of content in order to boost pupils' understanding of the discipline.

THE PROBLEM.

The new syllabus was launched in secondary schools in 1990. According to official policy, it was earmarked for eventually phasing out the pre-independence History syllabi 2158 and 2160, which had remained in existence since the achievement of political independence on 18 April 1980. However, no sooner had the new syllabus settled in the secondary schools than it met resistance. Under normal conditions, a syllabus is reviewed after a trial period of five years. The History Syllabus 2166 did not wait for that long. The National History Subject Panel reviewed it in 1992 amidst the

growing pressure of resistance from schools. Private and church schools in particular, voiced concern over the content and ideology of the syllabus. Vengesayi (1996:10) observes:

Religious organisations were unhappy with the exclusion of the history of missionaries. Private schools ... found the socialist thrust in the syllabus inimical to their economic views and practices.

Writing, in order to show the extent and magnitude of resistance to the adoption of the ‘O’ Level History Syllabus 2166 by church schools, the Rt. Rev. A. G. Berridge SJ (1992:2) revealed that “in 1991 only 2 500 students wrote History in 50 of our schools, compared to 5 200 writing Geography.” The same pattern was maintained right into the late 1990s. The candidature for History perpetually remained far below that of the other humanities, especially Geography, its major counterpart. Entry statistics for the Mashonaland East Region confirm this:

History and Geography Entries (1993-1997): Mashonaland East Region.

SUBJECT	YEARS AND STATISTICS					TOTAL
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	
History (2166)	3 419	4 504	4 582	5 020	5 587	23 112
Geography (2248)	9 955	10 031	10 637	11 461	12 179	54 263

Source: The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, Zimbabwe
'O' Level History and Geography Subjects Grade Statistics.

The above statistical information is evident that most secondary schools in the region in question resisted the introduction of the new History Syllabus 2166. In the five years stretching to 1997, only 23 112 History candidates registered for the subject in contrast to a massive 54 263 for Geography, representing a clear, comparative 134.78% deficit.

Reports of students dropping history, opting for other subjects became rampant as teachers complained about the critical shortage of resources to teach effectively the subject. Concern was expressed over the ideological basis of the syllabus and the novelty of its skills dimension indeed deskilled the teachers and unsettled their pupils.

However, Taruvinga (1997:36) thinks the issue of inadequacy of teaching and learning resources and the socialist bias had nothing to do with the unpopularity of the new History Syllabus 2166. In his opinion:

The socialist bias could be circumvented, as indeed happened in most schools, when teachers expressed the right to interpret and teach the content in a manner they were comfortable with. Such teachers taught the new history in the most traditional ways.

On the contrary, it would appear the evasion of the ideological thrust and the stubborn persistence of traditional methods went against the grain of the new 'O' level Zimbabwe History Syllabus 2166. Such approaches partly rendered the attainment of its assessment objectives impossible. Hence the user-resistance and its subsequent demise. The premises of the new syllabus especially, skills development, broke fresh ground and had crucial implications for initial and in-service training for the history teachers, and in the provision of resource material. But, research findings seem to suggest that the new History Syllabus 2166 developers paid scant consideration to the fundamental requirements of curriculum development. An analysis of the curriculum innovation process that gave birth to the new syllabus reveals the inevitability of the implementation problems.

THE NEW HISTORY SYLLABUS 2166 CHANGE PROCESS: THE INITIAL PLANNING PHASE.

Available evidence shows that the change process associated with the initiation, design, development and implementation of the new 'O' Level Zimbabwe History Syllabus 2166 was highly political. Overall, consultations by the National History Subject Panel for the views of the stakeholders were parochial; and the participation of the history teachers in the innovation process, was insignificant. It was partly through the new History Syllabus 2166 that the central government planned to introduce socialism in the country. Consequently, a few historians and professionals of socialist persuasion who had been grafted into the National History Subject Panel by the chairman of the then Curriculum Development Unit (C.D.U.) dominated decision-making. For instance, in response to the criticism that some schools had objected to the socialist approach of the History Syllabus 2166, the panel categorically stated that there is no country that does not incorporate its national philosophy into its curriculum. It further observed that Zimbabweans were operating in a socialist environment and that there was, therefore, no way the socialist philosophy could be avoided. Members of the panel were themselves reminded to be decided socialists.¹ It was this ideologically charged panel that crafted the new History Syllabus 2166. From the minutes of the meetings held in 1984, its members included; the E.O. (C.D.U.) as chairman, E.O.s (History) for Harare,

Mashonaland, Manicaland, Masvingo, Midlands and the Matabeleland Provinces, and the E.O. (Standards Control) Ministry of Education and Culture. (The abbreviations E.O. stand in for Education Officer.)

1 Minutes of the meeting of the National History Subject Panel dated 10 May 1989 held at the Teachers' Hostel, Mount Pleasant, Harare.

Teacher training colleges on the panel were Morgan Zintec, Gweru and Hillside colleges. From the schools, the Harare Province had two teachers' representatives, while the Mashonaland, Masvingo, Manicaland and Matabeleland Provinces had one each on the panel. The Zimbabwe Teachers' Association (ZIMTA) was equally represented, although most of its members then were drawn from the primary schools. Yet, History was not a curricular subject in those schools. The absence, from the panel, of representatives of the University of Zimbabwe and Belvedere Teachers' Training College was conspicuous. The secondary school history teachers in some provinces of the country were not represented on the National History Subject Panel and yet they were the ones who were expected to implement the new history syllabus. Of the ten provinces of the country, only Harare, Masvingo, Manicaland, and Midlands had active teachers' representatives who featured prominently in History meetings. One teacher represented the Mashonaland Province on the panel, but at the same time, the province is administratively divided into Mashonaland East, West and Central Provinces. The

Matabeleland Province, which comprises Bulawayo, Matabeleland North and South Provinces, was treated in the same manner. It can, therefore, be reasonably concluded that the structure and composition of the National History Subject Panel, which planned the new History Syllabus 2166 project was not representative of all the interest groups in the country. The absence of some of the key stakeholders from this important national, curriculum-change organ meant that their expressive views on the new syllabus were not taken on board. When the syllabus was eventually released for their use, they did not identify with it. Neither would they claim its ownership. It seemed an imposition, bound to generate strong resistance.

The next phase in the change process that resulted in the formulation of the new History Syllabus 2166 involved its design and development. The researcher analysed the mode of operation of the National History Subject Panel, during this crucial stage, in order to determine the extent of participation of the concerned parties.

THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW HISTORY SYLLABUS 2166.

Presenting a paper at one of the meetings organized by the National History Subject Panel, on the features of the new History Syllabus 2166, Yon (1989:1) wrote:

The new syllabus has taken several years to develop. It brings together work, which was done at regional levels throughout the country. This work was synthesized and debated by the National History Subject Panel and many drafts have been produced since the exercise began in 1984.

However, the view that the new History Syllabus 2166 was a product of the collective work of the history teachers in all the provinces of the country is contestable. In some provinces, the role of the history teachers in this vital exercise was petty. In the Mashonaland East Province, for example, no strong history teacher's organizational structures ever existed between 1984 and 1989, the period associated with the formulation and development of the History Syllabus 2166. The history teachers only founded the Mashonaland East History Association in 1993, partly as a strategy, to find collectively solutions to the problems they perceived were linked to the teaching of the new syllabus.

It appears that there is paucity of evidence to suggest or even support that the National History Subject Panel had extensively canvassed for the new History Syllabus 2166. Some important stakeholders claim that they made no contributions to the design and development of the new syllabus. Authorities of the Roman Catholic schools argue that all they did was to react to the syllabus when it was sent to them by the C.D.U. A letter

written to the Bishop of Gweru by Sister Hyacinth Gerbecks of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (Z.C.B.C.) dated 2 February 1991 provides the evidence. In this correspondence, the Z.C.B.C. acknowledged receipt of a copy of the new History Syllabus 2166 from the C.D.U. Expressing concern at the content of the new syllabus, to be examined for the first time in 1991, the Z.C.B.C. called for the evaluation of the syllabus and dialogue with the Ministry of Education.²

Writing on the same issue, the Rt. Rev. A. G. Berridge SJ, then Secretary for Education of the Z.C.B.C., advised the Ministry of Education that in any future development of syllabuses, it would be desirable that the church schools be consulted well in advance of any implementation, so that they have the opportunity to voice their concerns before the event³. This may partly explain the negative attitudes the church and private schools displayed towards the new History Syllabus 2166. In the Mashonaland East Province, only one out of the three private schools in that province adopted the syllabus.

2 Letter on the History Syllabus 2166 dated 2 February 1991 written to Rt. Rev. Francis Mugadzi, Bishop of Gweru, by Sister H. Gerbecks of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishop's Conference.

From the preceding, the temptation to conclude that only government officials and members of the National History Subject Panel played the most important role in the design and development of the History Syllabus 2166 is irresistible. Grassroots-level

inputs were minimal. Having analysed the planning and designing processes of the new History Syllabus 2166, the researcher examined how the syllabus was then disseminated to all the secondary schools in the country.

THE DISSEMINATION OF THE HISTORY SYLLABUS 2166 TO THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

A review of primary documents showed that the History Syllabus 2166 was promoted and disseminated to the secondary schools in the country through mere circulars and workshops. The syllabus was, however, not pilot-tested. There is no written evidence which points to the pilot testing of the syllabus. The National History Subject Panel laid plans for the introduction of the new syllabus within a selected number of schools before its widespread dissemination to the schools. According to Yon (1987:2):

Regional History Education Officers would identify a specified number of schools in their respective regions, which would begin the new syllabus... The number of schools would be progressively and substantially increased. These plans were, nevertheless, not fulfilled. The syllabus appears to have been widely diffused into the schools after its approval by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 1988.

3 Letter written by the Rt. Rev. A. G. Berridge SJ of the Z.C.B.C. to the Head of the History Department (C.D.U.) dated 7 October, 1991, on the new History Syllabus 2166.

This meant that the problematic aspects, which would otherwise have been taken care of, had the syllabus been pilot-tested in trial schools, still remained unresolved. Teachers were soon to raise eyebrows due to the mandatory full-scale implementation of this new syllabus.

Indeed, no sooner had the syllabus asserted its position in the school curriculum than it was severely criticised to its fateful extirpation. The Roman Catholic schools, in particular, openly expressed their reservations on some aspects of the syllabus' aims, content and methodology. Taking stock of what was perceived as shortcomings of the syllabus, the Rt. Rev. A. G. Berridge SJ (1991) wrote to the Ministry of Education and Culture to the effect that it would be desirable that any new syllabus be tested in pilot schemes in a variety of selected schools, and adjustments made, before a syllabus is issued for general use. The failure by the National History Subject Panel to pre-test the new History Syllabus 2166 before its wide-scale implementation in the user system is, therefore, a critical factor which cannot be ignored in any serious analysis of the problems of its implementation.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HISTORY SYLLABUS 2166.

The in-service training of teachers in the requirements of a new curriculum change project is pre-requisite to effective implementation. With reference to the innovative History Syllabus 2166, the problems of its implementation partially arose from the inadequate preparation of the history teachers through in-service training. In consequence, the teachers concerned experienced serious problems in interpreting the new syllabus.

IN-SERVICE TRAINING OF THE HISTORY TEACHERS IN THE NEW HISTORY SYLLABUS 2166.

Research evidence has it that a working committee was appointed by the C.D.U. to direct the implementation of the new History Syllabus 2166. Its terms of reference included the holding of in-service courses for the history teachers, as well as the writers who would assist in the production of the teaching and learning materials for the syllabus. According to the progress report presented to the National History Subject Panel in May 1989 by the panel chairman, in-service courses on the new syllabus were held for the Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South, Mashonaland Central and Mashonaland East Provinces. Financial and other constraints made it difficult to hold

courses for all the provinces in 1988. The report noted that it was hoped that all the provinces would have been 'in-serviced' by 1988. However, this was not possible due to a number of factors including staffing, pressures created by the localization of 'O' level marking, and occasional reluctance by Regional Officers to take part in the in-service training programme.⁴

On the basis of the report in question, it is evident that the history teachers were not sufficiently prepared to handle the new History Syllabus 2166. In a study carried out in the Mashonaland East Province, Chitate (1998) established that in-service courses in the new syllabus did not benefit many teachers in that province. Only seventeen (28.3%) of the history teachers who participated in that research were in service trained in handling the new History Syllabus 2166. Forty-three (71.7%) of these teachers were never involved in the in-service training programmes. While it is true that some in-service courses in the new History Syllabus 2166 were mounted in some provinces of the country by the C.D.U. for the history teachers, these were grossly inadequate. In most cases, they only extended for a few days. As a result, the majority of the history teachers were ill prepared to meet the challenges of the syllabus. This confirms Chikede's (1993:11) argument: "The introduction of the syllabus 2166 raised eyebrows, as many teachers [re-programmed] themselves to meet the demands of the new

syllabus.” Indeed, if the history teachers had been fully ‘in-serviced’ and grounded in the requirements of the new History Syllabus 2166, they would not have been many concerns among them when the syllabus was first introduced in the schools in 1990. Therefore, the failure by the National History Subject Panel to fully acquaint the history teachers with the spellings of the new syllabus made its semantic implementation problematic.

AVAILABILITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES FOR THE HISTORY SYLLABUS 2166.

An analysis of the implementation of the History Syllabus 2166 would be incomplete without an examination of the availability of resources meant to assist in the teaching and learning of the syllabus. Apparently, the new syllabus was disseminated for

4 The New Zimbabwe ‘O’ Level History Syllabus: Progress Report for the National History Subject Panel of May 1989.

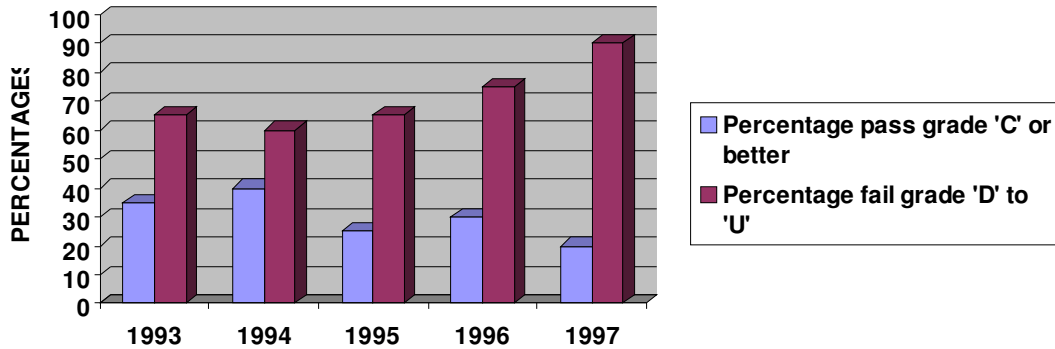
general use without adequate, relevant teaching and learning resources. Particularly, in critical shortage were History kits with the subject matter and visual materials needed for the development of historical skills. Resultantly, the attainment of its objectives initially proved difficult to achieve. Evidence in confirmation of this observation is available. Reacting to questions regarding the availability of suitable, supporting

materials for the new syllabus, Yon (1989:10), is quick to point out that the new syllabus did not make redundant existing materials:

[In fact,] [m]aterial in current use will continue to be useful for its content though teachers will be encouraged to apply the brand of historiography envisaged in the new syllabus. However, there is a challenge before us to produce more documentary materials in order to promote the intended skills ... The successful implementation of the syllabus, [nevertheless], is dependent on teachers developing their own resources.

To expect the history teachers, whose majority had received very little training in the teaching of the new syllabus, to produce their own teaching and learning resources, was a monumental impossibility. Conclusively, one is not wide off the mark to suggest that the shortage of appropriate teaching and learning resources for the new History Syllabus 2166, which inundated most secondary schools, frustrated both the teachers and pupils alike. Hence their negative attitudes towards the new curriculum. This may be one of the reasons why pupils' academic performances in the syllabus were most disappointing. Grade statistics from the Mashonaland East Province are evident.

**PERFORMANCES OF CANDIDATES IN THE MASHONALAND EAST PROVINCE
IN THE 'O' LEVEL HISTORY SYLLABUS 2166 EXAMINATIONS: 1993 TO 1997.**



Source: The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, Zimbabwe 'O' Level History Syllabus 2166 Grade Statistics for Schools in the Mashonaland East Province (1993 to 1997).

The statistics for 1991 and 1992, the first two years of the examination of the syllabus were not available in a condensed form. However, comprehensive data available show that the percentage pass rates of the candidates, in the Mashonaland East Province, for the period from 1993 to 1997 were never higher than 38.8% registered in 1994. In fact, pupils' performances in the syllabus were, since 1994, characterized by a progressive decline. The year 1997, recorded the lowest percentage pass-rate of 16.6%. Because of this poor showing, the syllabus was eventually withdrawn from the school curriculum. It was replaced, in 2002, by the Syllabus 2167. On the basis of the foregoing research evidence, one holds the view that the innovation process of the new 'O' Level Zimbabwe History Syllabus 2166 was not fully carried out. Inevitably, implementation

problems dogged its tenuous position in the school curriculum. The final result was its ignominious exit.

Perhaps it was the lop-sided conceptual development of the new History Syllabus 2166, which was its greatest demise. The 'new' history philosophy encourages open-mindedness and intellectual detachment. However, the new syllabus was a contradiction of terms. It required teachers and pupils to examine history from a prescribed, ideological standpoint, that is, Marxism-Leninism. This was well stated in the syllabus document aims 2.5, 3.3 and 3.4. Aim 2.5, for example, confined students to the development of 'historical skills and tools of analysis within the conceptual framework of historical and dialectical materialism.' While the syllabus promoted the formation of value judgements, these were, nevertheless, consistent with a materialist world outlook. It was ironic that the syllabus attempted to develop, in pupils, higher order conceptual skills such as the ability to detect bias when the syllabus itself was oblivious of its own prejudice. It prevented teachers and pupils from challenging its materialist purview of history.

With the ideological collapse of the Eastern World in the 1990s, described by one observer as a 'social earthquake', topics in the syllabus, such as 'Capitalism in Crisis',

became a mockery of intellectual honesty. For, it was Communism more in crisis than Capitalism. No wonder why Vengesayi (1992:2) warns: “Choice of concepts included in the syllabus should be convincing and not be emotive; realistic and not blatantly propagandist; balanced and not biased.” Structurally, the syllabus was too long to be covered within the prescribed two years of the middle secondary school course. It promoted participatory and problem-solving methods, including the critical use of sources, as one of the most exciting and rewarding ways of doing history. However, because of the constraints of time, such methods as these could not be effectively employed. This appears to have caused the development of apathy among the teachers who implemented it. On average, the History subject is allocated four, 30-40 minute periods per week in most schools.

Finally, the syllabus was designed to allow pupils to carry out simple research into aspects of local and national history, using primary and secondary sources. According to the syllabus document, arrangements for making research an assessment objective were going to be announced in future years. Regrettably, therefore, this never materialised. On the whole, the new ‘O’ Level Zimbabwe History Syllabus 2166 not only fell short of the history teachers’ expectations. Right at its inception, it failed to take off. It was indeed hasty in approach, radical yes, but self-contradictory.

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