

**NIPPING TERRORISM IN THE BUD IN THE NIGERIAN SPACE:  
THE VISION IN IROBI'S *HANGMEN ALSO DIE* AND  
EZENWANEBE'S *GIDDY FESTIVAL***

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**Abstract**

Terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001 and subsequent attacks on Pentagon and threats for more attacks on United State soil made it painfully clear, even to an uninformed observer that we have entered a period of history; where states authorities can be confronted in anarchical ways. In Nigeria on 20 February, 2009, a disagreement between a convoy of *Yusuffiya sect* and local police turned violent in North-eastern state of Maiduguri leading to the birth of the dreaded terrorist group known as Boko Haram. This scenario challenged the global community and state actors to declare war on terrorism and come up with counter-terrorism initiatives. What is terrorism? What scenarios can result to terrorist acts? This investigation is grounded on qualitative methodology of literary criticism of the play text: Esiaba Irobi's *Hangmen Also Die* and Osita Ezenwanebe's *Giddy Festival*. It is also built on Marxist conflict theory of social strata. It can be established that the best form of counter-terrorism is for leaders to disengage themselves from actions that can lead to terrorism.

**Introduction**

Conflict is as old as the world of humanity, the same as drama and the act of imitation. From the conception of dramatic ideas, conflict is the vehicle that keeps that idea in motion till the stage of resolution. In fact, it is difficult for drama to take place without conflict. From the classical Greek period to modern time, drama or theatre has continued to address the issues of conflicts in human society. It maybe conflict between man and the supernatural, between man and his environment or between man and man. But when conflict turns violence between man and man, leading to destruction of lives and properties, there is often a call for caution and curtailment of such violence conflict from

man himself. Violence conflict first started when a Biblical character, Cain killed his brother Abel, since then on, violence continues to take different dimensions.

Terrorism is a unique form of violent conflict by individual, groups or state actors to achieve particular objectives, instil fear or for revenge. David Rapoport in his seminar paper highlighted four waves of modern global terrorism in history. The first, which he described as 'anarchist' wave of modern terrorism began in Russia in the 1880s and lasted until the 1920s. The second wave is 'anti-colonial' began in the 1920s and ended in the 1960s. The third wave is 'new left' wave began in the 1960s and continued through to the 1980s. The fourth 'religious' wave emerged in 1979 and continues until today (2). The earliest form of modern terrorism focused on high profile state personalities.

The 1890s is described as the "Golden Age of Assassination" in the West; monarchs, prime ministers, and presidents were struck down one after another. Most assassins were anarchists who moved easily across international borders to assassinate foreign leaders. Every 18 months a leader is assassinated in Europe. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand (heir to the throne of Austro-Hungarian Empire) of Austria and his wife Sophie by the Bosnia Serb nationalist (Gavrilo Princip) at Bosnia capital of Sarajevo on 28 June, 1914 led the world into a new form of violence conflict that resulted to World War 1. According to *The Watchtower*, a religious magazine, an estimate of 10 million people was killed and 20 million mutilated (3). States also carry out the act of terrorism. Modern examples of drastic state terrorism include Nazi Germany, Stalinist Soviet Union, communist China of the Mao period, Pol Pot's Cambodia, and several other dictatorships and totalitarian regimes. Thus, 11 September, 2001 was not the first time the act of terrorism was carried out. But the event on this day ignited a new form of international terrorism and counter-terrorism initiatives.

The concept of terrorism is difficult to define because it is difficult to differentiate terrorist from 'freedom fighters'. The Global Terrorism Database defines a terrorist attack "as the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation" (9). But this definition excludes the act of terrorism by state actors. The European Union states that terrorism as an act must include these three features:

- i. seriously intimidating a population;
- ii. unduly compelling a government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act;
- iii. seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation (Mannik 154).

To achieve their objectives, terrorists carry out various forms of illegal activities that range from attacks on a person's life to cutting vital services to society, and other respective threats. These include hijackings, kidnappings and other forms of criminal activity. Several sects have used violence to compel their enemies through fear, throughout human history. According to Erik Mannik:

Jewish Zealots assassinated enemies in their struggle against the Roman Empire, Assassins killed crusaders in the Holy Land, in 1605 Guy Fawkes nearly destroyed the British Parliament, and anarchists have assassinated various high-ranking officials and heads of states (153).

The terror act of 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2001 at the World Trade Centre in New York and subsequent attack in Washington though not the first act of terrorism on record, shows that non state perpetrators motivated by religion can use violence to pursue their goals. It is important to note that these sects can transform to other movement with the same ideology to carry out the act of violence in order to instil fear on their targets. The terror attacks of 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2003 in Istanbul, 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2004 in Madrid, and 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2005 in London, and 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2007 in Glasgow, 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 Boston Marathon bombing carried out by two brothers, Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, American-born Omar Mateen killed 49 people and wounded 58 at the nightclub in Orlando, Florida on 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 give credence to ability of al-Qaeda; the terrorist organisation that carried out 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2001 attack to transform into an international network of other groups (*The Guardian*).

Typical of such affiliations is Boko Haram; an Islamic sect that believes politics in northern Nigeria has been seized by a group of corrupt, false Muslims and war against not only the Muslims but also against the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The activities of the sect which involves not only suicide bombing, but also kidnapping, assassination and robbery extended to neighbouring countries shows that they use violence to instil fear in order to pursue their aim of creating an Islamic state since 2009 in Nigeria. In June and August 2011, the group attacked Police Headquarters and United Nations building, both in the nation's capital, respectively, which attracted international audience. According to Andrew Walker, "the attack on the UN compound launched Boko Haram into world news and established it as a militant group with the technical, and doctrinal, capacity to produce suicide bombs" (1). This shows that sects or groups that tend to use violence to achieve their goals cannot be underestimated. The same applies to the gang in Esiaba Irobi's *Hang Men Also Die* and assassins in Osita Ezenwanebe's *Giddy Festival*.

### **Theoretical Framework**

There are four major theories that have dominated theoretical argument on terrorism. These are; Psychology approach focuses on personality, psycho-pathology and psycho-social traits of a 'terrorist', Orthodox-Realism and Liberalism approach focuses on non-state actor terrorism; Critical terrorism approach focuses on state terrorism; and Karl Marx's Historical Materialism. But this investigation is grounded on Marx's historical materialism to argue the root cause of terrorism in relation to Esiaba Irobi's *Hangmen Also Die* and Osita Ezenwanebe's *Giddy Festival*.

Historical materialism is a philosophical perspective that was developed by Germany philosopher Karl Marx (1818-1883) to explain the successive evolution of society and the conditions of its material life. Marx's historical materialism came into being as a criticism of Friedrich Hegel's dialectics that argued that; material world was a

reflection of a 'universal idea' or God. Karl Marx therefore rejected Hegel idea and developed historical materialism as the dialectics of historical development that cut across all societies throughout human history and struggle between these classes. Marx maintained that the history of all previously existing societies has been the history of class struggle that originated out of the existing social relations to production. Using Marx's analogy of two opposing classes in the societies, Ogunrotifa asserts that the history of man in the society has being that of:

freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.... The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonisms. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, and new forms of struggle in place of the old ones (28-29).

Historical materialism is therefore the scientific law governing human development and historical succession of society. Its fundamental idea is that,

in the social production of life, men enter into definite relations that are crucial and independent of their will. The sum total of these relations of production creates the economic structure of society, the real base, on which raises a legal and political superstructure and forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general (Marx 71-72).

Marx maintained that the history of all existing society has been the history of class struggle that emanated out of the existing social relations to production. He gave a theory of social class on the basis of which stratification or inequality in society is derived. According to Marxian perspective, the systems of stratification derive from the relationships of the social groups to the forces of production. In the stratified societies, there are two major social groups: a ruling class and a subject class. The power of the ruling class is derived from its ownership and control of the forces of production. The ruling class exploits and oppresses the subject class. As a result there, is a basic conflict of interest between the two classes. Marx used the term "class" to refer to the main divisions in all stratification system. A class is a social group whose members share the same relationship to the forces of production. Marx believed that Western societies had developed through the following main stages: the primitive communism, the ancient society, Feudal society and the current capitalist society. During each epoch labour power required for production is supplied by the subject class, that is, slaves, serfs, and proletariat. The subject class is made up of the majority of the population whereas; the ruling class forms a minority. The relationship between the major social classes is one of mutual dependence and conflict. However, the mutual dependency of the two classes is

not a relationship of equal. Instead it is a relationship of exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed. Marx argued that social stratification divides society into two classes and the unequal distribution of wealth leads to discontent and ultimately to revolution in the society. It is this revolution that leads to the emergence of Suicide Squad in *Hangmen Also Die* and Assassins in Osita Ezenwanebe's *Giddy Festival*, the primary source of this investigation.

### **Causes of Violence and Terrorism in *Hangmen Also Die* and *Giddy Festival***

In Africa, the act of terrorism and assassination is not part of our communal existence. Thus, protecting another person's possession is a measured value in African mutual existence. So, the act of stealing can be traced to generations. At the stage of marriage, family members always carried out investigation to make sure that there is no trace of theft in the lineage of intended partners; either a man or the woman. This is because of the belief that 'he whose father or mother is a thief will be a thief or give birth to one in his lineage. Thus forming marriage alliance with such family will amount to ruining one's offspring in the future generations. This is evident in a conversation between Ibiwari whose son joins The Suicide Squad and Tamara in *Hangmen Also Die*:

**Tamara:** How can he? Doesn't he know what is good from what is evil? Don't you know who brought him up? Tamara! Ibiwari, we don't steal in our family. Stealing is an evil thing. It leaves a stain on your name. A stain that never goes no matter what soap or sponge you use to scrub the skin of the name of the thief. It is a shameful thing. So, as you said, go now and search hard for your black goat before night fall (62).

This claim shows that the act of stealing is frowned at in Africa and it is news when a child is found stealing or joining robbery gang. Such investigation of tracing the family lineage about possible 'bad blood' becomes inevitable. But the act of robbery and terror in *Hangmen Also Die* is the creation of the environment stricken with poverty and this necessitated the application of Marxist class revolution which is acquired through formal education and greed on the part of the ruling class. Since revolution starts from the stomach (Diala 81), an environment stricken with poverty is a breeding ground for organised crime. The Marxist theory believes that the end of capitalism which nurtures economic inequality in the society is class revolution and the unique thing about being human is that we create our world (Marx 69). The height of injustice is greedy diversion of public goods. These are the creation of man and environment that develop to terrorism. According to R. I. P.:

**R.I.P.:** (*To the audience.*) It all started at school. We all attended the same school...the, we were freshmen, fresh in the world, fresh from home and families stricken by poverty. At school, sometimes, we did not know where our next meal was coming from. So we became pregnant. Pregnant with ideas. Pregnant with dreams. Dreams and ambitions to change this nation. Change its leadership. Create a new lease of life for

its citizens. So, we formed an organisation, an organization of progressive, radical young men poised to change the world. We were called the COMRADES. Our Staffs Adviser was one Dr. Ogbansiegbe, a heavily bearded man who looked like African reincarnation of Fidel Castro (37-38).

It is this environment that breeds the criminal gang who are tools in the hand of Dr Ogbansiegbe, a political science lecturer who wants to experiment the Marxist theory of class revolution for his own selfish ego as a gubernatorial candidate to win election. The political scientist must have watched closely how the ruling class has marginalised the 'haves not' creating a deep economic gap between both classes. Though, he is one of the victims of the gang he creates the idea and thought live after him. He describes the act of terrorism as the legitimate way by the poor to overthrow a corrupt government. As political scientist who is verse in Marxist ideology and has memorised Karl Marx's Communist Manifesto from cover to cover, Dr. Ogbansiegbe is aware of the shortcoming of government in the developing countries, and sees unemployed graduates as potential revolutionaries. The heavily bearded man, who looks like the African reincarnation of Fidel Castro of Cuba, believes that the only means to overthrow a corrupt government is through violence and an act of terrorism. By giving different instances of revolution via terrorism like the Irish Republican Army in Ireland, Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya and other similar insurrection against Apartheid in South Africa that enabled black majority to rule. He succeeds in planting violence in the heart of the youngsters. Dr. Ahitophel Ogbansiegbe is gifted with oratory, and the manner he gesticulate while delivery his speech makes him an actor.

According to R. I. P., "...he had a way with words. He used words like a loaded pistol. He knew how to hit the target of your heart with his verbal bullets..." (38); no doubt his students love him. He is their role model and he uses them as a tool to target his political enemies who rigged him out of a gubernatorial election. He dreams of creating a state of anarchy using his political hammers and spanners. As a political mechanic, who was educated in the University of Moscow, in Russia, the heart of the former socialist republic where Marxist ideology was experimented, he is ideologically opposed to capitalism that supports accumulation of wealth, at the detriment of others. This is his ideas that can bring about change for a better future of the younger generation. He thus, inculcates in their mind the act of violence which can only be realised through terrorism, the negative implication of violence in the society that is in contrast to Esiaba Irobi's vision.

In the same vein, in *Hangmen Also Die*, the position of leadership has been high jacked by the old generation who do not have the interest of the people at heart. They are only skilled on how to siphon the common wealth of the people for their personal and family use. According to Acid, "the Constituent Assembly is filled with the faces of the same ancient chimpanzees" (46). The youths are not given opportunity to contribute their own quota to their own welfare. In the words of the suicide squad:

**R. I. P.:** We have no jobs.

**Acid:** Therefore we have no money.

**Dayan:** Which means we cannot marry.

**R. I. P.:** And consequently cannot have children.

**Chorus:** We are the rejects of the world.

**R. I. P.:** (*Violently.*) So, if today, we have turned to violence as the only weapon to redeem our destiny, redeem our fate, our future and our manhood. It is because... (46).

Despite the educational background of the youth, lack of job and marginalization reduce them to extreme penury. Wartimi Tamuno, who takes the gang name ‘Mortuary’ holds a first class degree in Statistics, but could not find a job after six years of graduation. Atiemie Waribo (Dayan) holds master degree in Political Science; Labomie Allagoa, also known as, Ayatollah Khomeini, has an LL.B degree and has been unemployed for five years; Tekena Iketubosin (Acid) has M.Sc. in Microbiology; and Konji Amakarama (Tetanus) is a qualified Mechanical Engineer. Same applies to the rest of the gang members.

Education is the best form of empowerment for youths; but this educational qualification could not secure a place for these youths in the society. When education is no longer capable of earning a living for the youths, it then stands in juxtaposition to what is meant to fulfil. Therefore, resulting to societal vices, such as, murderous vampires, hangmen and outlaws, whose only understanding for positive societal change is the act of violence, robbery and terrorism. Mortuary and Khomeini highlight this:

**Mortuary:** (*Demonstrating as he prowls.*) Yes, like hangmen we come, our wrists as ropes, our hands groping for your neck, our fingers itching for the grip on your neck...and once our talons find their target...

**Khomeini:** (*Wringing.*) We wring your neck like a chicken’s neck, yes, like a wet towel, (*through clenched teeth*) we twist and twist until the bone breaks behind the neck, and the spinal cord snaps behind the back, until it snaps, snaps like a twig between... (54).

It is this act of terror of the gang that attracts Dimeari despite his good upbringing as the son of the Prophetess Tamara, after years of being ‘successfully’ unemployed. He feels rejected by the society and empty. He wants to do something that would shake the world, something that will make the world realise he exists, something violent. The presence of such group in the society is not difficult for him to discover as he traces their hideout with ease. His examination as a successfully frustrated unemployed graduate and slim body earned him membership position among the Suicide Squad. This is as a result of the failure of the ruling elites to provide enabling environment, choices and opportunities for the progress of the youths and inclusion in the leadership positions. This portrays or represents state of the nation that breeds training ground for organised crime and reign of terror and anarchy.

Diversion of the state resources by the ruling class, lack of opportunities and leadership of exclusion creates an avenue for violence and terrorism to overthrow the epoch. Such deprivation is the way Fubara Igonikon (Accidental Discharge) is disengaged from the police force. After being recruited by the force with SSCE qualification, he proceeds to the University for first and second degrees. On returning to the force for promotion, D.S.P. gives reasons why he is discharge from the force:

**D.S.P.:** Because you are overqualified for this job.

**Discharge:** How?

**D.S.P.:** What am I? As I stand here so, what am I?

**Discharge:** D.S.P.

**D.S.P.:** What is my qualification?

**Discharge:** I don't know, Sir

**D.S.P.:** Fool! My qualification is G.C.E. Ordinary Level. 6 papers at 7 sitting!  
(*Laughs*) (81-82).

Fubara Igonikon becomes part of the killer squad not only because he is disengaged from the police force, but he is disengaged by someone who has not earned up to his own qualifications. The issues of having unqualified individuals in position of authorities and certificate forgery on the part of those in power are no longer news in Nigeria political space (*Premium Times*). The playwright is advocating for leadership switch in order for qualified individuals to shoulder the position of authorities. Similarly, one of Nigeria notable authors, Wole Soyinka, warns about negative implication of having unqualified persons in position of authority in *The Play of Giants*. The by-product of such deprivation is violence and terrorism. Khomeini echoes the vision of the suicide squad: "We are assassins, professional assassins, we live on blood" (80).

Another major cause of violence terror in the play is the corruption on the part of the leaders, and those holding the position of authority. One of such is Chief Isokipiri Erekosima, the Honourable Commissioner for Local Government, Rural Development and Chieftaincy Affairs. The chief who is a thief believes that 'there is a thief in all of us'. According to Tamara the prophetess:

**Tamara:** 3 Million Naira, compensation money which the Federal Government gave to the citizens of Izon State, to balm our minds against the crude oil spillage which has ravaged our farms and wrecked our lives. This man (Chief Isokipiri Erekosima) seized it and is using it to crown himself today (80).

The chief is not only the Alfa and Omega of Izon State; he also hires seven fat witches from Bendel State to cover his criminal activities despite the havoc of oil spillage. One of such havocs is ruining the farmland, thus making it unproductive and blinding of Ibiaye which is the health implication of it. The activities of the multinational corporations ruining the environment at the detriment of the people's health without cleaning, is only normal in Nigeria. This is mostly done by oil spillage that destroys



aquatic habitat and gas that affect ozone layers which may have domino-effect on humans. Diverting the money meant for such cleaning or as compensation is tantamount to dehumanising the humanity in man and crime against humanity. The chief not only shares the money among those in position of authority that supposed to check his excesses and create an avenue for politics of inclusion, but backs his criminal behaviour with citations from *The Prince*, a 16<sup>th</sup> century political treatise written by Italian diplomat and political theorist, Niccolo Machiavelli. The treatise states that those who seek or are in position of authority does so for personal gain, and carefully consider the injuries they might do the people cumulatively so that they might win their favour in a long run. These are the injuries caused by the ruling class that deepened the inequality gap between the two classes resulting to reprisal attack through terrorism from the suicide squad.

Similarly, Osita Ezenwanebe addresses the same notion in her political drama, *Giddy Festival*; a microcosm of African political democratic experience centres on selfish political opportunism and assassination. The story centres on Chief Aggrandi, the main protagonist who is nominated as the flag bearer of the local government election under the platform of People Fortune Party (PFP). Having been aware of the level of political thuggery, assassinations, and depravity that characterised Nigerian political space, Osita's *Giddy Festival* uses the phenomenon to comment on the level of disorder and deterioration that often provide an avenue for frequent killing and instil fear not only in the minds of the political opponents, but also in the mind of the masses. The victim of such murder is dead body on a street of Jilanje, in Gabo which was carried out earlier by Ofong and Deje; the henchmen of chief Aggrandi. According to a resident of Gabo, Chief Aggrandi is given mandate by:

**Ifejika:** The kingmakers in this place, the royal fathers and mothers, the area boys and girls, the vigilante group, the party kingpins, the political godfathers and mothers, the supporters' club, the ethnic militia, the religious brotherhood and sisterhood, the fraternities and... (31).

This is the avenue that gives birth to violence and subsequent assassination in the play under the supervision of Aggrandi. It is important to note that the unemployed youths are being deprived of their place in the society, but instead hire as assailants to carry out such acts.

Another cause of violence is the high rate of poverty in Gabo. That is the reason when two residents of Gabo area Sese and Tiko, stumbled on a corpse on a street of Jilanje they focuses on robbing the dead body instead of reporting to the police or the local authority. This is noted in their conversation:

**Sese:** What business do I have with the man?

**Tiko:** The corpse?

**Sese:** You're mad. Open your eyes and see what you should see.

**Tiko:** Oh, the briefcase?

**Sese:** Good one. Isn't it?

**Tiko:** Sure. Sure.

**Sese:** (*Kicks the briefcase, out of the hand of the corpse.*) There.

**Tiko:** (*Goes and picks the briefcase, inspect it.*) Splendid. Italian stuff. Good leather, gold trimmings and.... (13)

The income gap between the rich and the poor is so wide that the two youngsters could rob the victim of political assassination of its possessions. *Giddy Festival* exposes societal decay in respect to sanctity of human life. Sese and Tiko represent the youths in any society that engage in social vice such as robbery, kidnapping and ritual killing and all sorts of violence to achieve their aim.

Similar violence often degenerates to extremism. It is that same inequality that Daniel E. Agbibo asserts that “have in part fuelled the rise of Boko Haram and the continuing conflict in the Niger Delta” (2). It can therefore be ascertain that, deprivation, Marxist ideology and corruption on the party of the ruling class has been responsible for continuous violence conflict and terrorism in Nigeria space. To nip the act of terror in Nigeria, not only corruption must be stamped out, but also the inequality gap must be reduced. This is achievable by creating an enabling environment and opportunities for the youth and leadership of inclusion.

### **War against Thought and Ideology**

The international community has been finding solution to end the act of terror in any form. The war against terrorism has been an on-going process right from the period of Anarchist (the first wave) to our time. After the assassination of then US President William McKinley in 1901, the war on terror and counter-terrorism became more urgent than never before. It was the first time states attempted to tackle terrorism globally. In the State of the Union Address on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1901 after the assassination of President William McKinley by an anarchist terrorist, The then United States President, Theodore Roosevelt states:

Anarchy is a crime against the whole human race; and all mankind should band against the anarchist. His crime should be made an offence against the law of nations, like piracy and that form of man-stealing known as the slave trade; for it is of far blacker infamy than either (Mannik 151).

In the same vain, the European nations signed an anti-anarchist protocol in 1904 that called for enhancement of international police cooperation and information sharing (Walls 23). But this attempt by states to wage war on terrorism failed because states were unable to forge consensus for joint action, which gave birth to second wave of terror also known as anticolonial wave. It was marked with the period where terrorists were mostly recognised as freedom fighters. But the third wave (new left) saw much more international collaboration in counter-terrorism activities. The UN adopted major conventions that banned hijacking, hostage taking and financing terrorist activities. But, these measures did not stamp out the act of terrorism, but instead, a more fundamentalist religious terrorism (the fourth wave) emerged. The event of 11 September, 2001, a century after the anarchist killed President William McKinley showed how the

perpetrators of the act, al-Qaeda were networked into international affiliations. Nine days after the attack on World Trade Centre the then US President George W. Bush addressed a joint session of Congress with the following words ‘Our war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated’ (Mannik 167). This pronouncement and the support of the international community led to the invasions and dethroned of Taliban ruled Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 under the leadership of a dictator Saddam Hussain. The invasions did not end terrorism, but instead resulted to counterinsurgencies.

Despite the fact that the sole architect of 11 September, 2001, Osama bin Ladin was later killed, it was not during the administration of George W. Bush and his killing did not stop subsequent attacks on US soil. This is because, since the attack on World Trade Centre, there have being series of terror attacks linked to al-Qaeda and its affiliations. Some of such attacks were the ones carried out by Abdulhakim Mujahid Muhammad, an American-born convert to Islam on 1 June, 2009. Mohammad opened fire on an army recruiting office in Little Rock, Arkansas. He killed one soldier and wounded another. Muhammad, who was previously living in Yemen, claimed to be a member of al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. More so, was the Boston Marathon bombing attack on 15 April, 2013. The perpetrators who are brothers learnt to make their bomb from the al-Qaida online magazine. On 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2017, a man drove a rented pickup truck into cyclists and runners on the Hudson River bike path on Manhattan’s lower west side, killing eight people and injuring 11. With these in mind, the war on terror is yet to be over. Despite US innovative technological and military prowess, they have not been able to end terrorism once and for all time.

Here in Nigeria, the fight against Islamic sect, Boko Haram has been so severe. Since 2009, the terror group has been carrying out various attacks on both the military and civilian. That is the reasons that President Muhammadu Buhari’s administration rank security as a major priority. In December 2015, after the renewed effort on counter-terrorism, the president claimed that the insurgent group has been “technically defeated”. But from then onward, hundreds of Nigerians have been killed in suicide attacks in coordinated attacks on communities in the North-East region, which proved that war on terror is far from being over. Still, on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2018, in his New Year broadcast to Nigerians the President insisted that Boko Haram has been defeated (*African News*). His claims came weeks after the approval of \$1 billion from the country’s excess crude account to fight the terrorist. The president’s claim does not mean Nigeria has made history by stamping out the act of terror and terrorist group from its soil. While other world leaders thorough out history called for renewed vigour on counter-terrorism, the president’s claim was not valid because many Nigerians continued to fall victim of the Islamic sect.

According to *Premium Times* of 3 August, 2018, at least two officers and 43 soldiers have been killed in Boko Haram attacks on military targets between 13 and 26 July, 2018 despite the presence of military special force tagged ‘Operation Lafiya Dole’. While the soldiers blamed the incidence on lack of equipment, Chief of Army Staff, Lieutenant General Tukur Buratai, accused them of being cowardly. Does that mean that the war on terror cannot record any success? From the above explanation, it is important

to note that every terrorist organisation operates under a certain ideology. Boko Haram belongs to the fourth wave which exploits Islamic religious and other grievances to perpetrate their violence action on their targets. Similarly, the Suicide Squad hinges their ideology on Marxist theory of revolution, which is anchored on violence act of terror to revolt against unemployment, deprivation, leadership of exclusion, lack of opportunity for the youths and extreme poverty. According US National Security Strategy:

...terrorism is not the inevitable by-product of poverty. Poverty is a major cause of grievances, and three billion people are living on less than two Euros a day, this means that there is a potentially large number of people who might be recruited by radicals advocating the use of indiscriminate violence in pursuit of their aims (Mannik 168).

It is pertinent from this statement that the act of terror or the best form of counter-terrorism initiative is addressing issues that can lead to such grievances. It is Esiaba Irobi's vision, as contained in *Hangmen Also Die* that such grievances as applicable to the violence gang should be addressed with utmost urgency. If that is done, then it can be concluded that it is the best form of counter-terrorism applicable to Nigeria political space. On the same note, *Giddy Festival* addresses the issues of poverty and marginalisation in the society. Ofong takes the offer of not only a henchman for Chief Aggrandi; but he also serves as his human carriage during his campaign tour. At the end of the campaign tour, he shares his regret with his friend, Deje:

**Ofong:** Chief Aggrandi gave us nothing. Immediately after the campaign, they went in for a closed-door meeting. We waited for him patiently. The aroma food and drinks coming from the meeting filled the place... we begged for food or drink but nothing... we even ran after him, but nothing.

**Deje:** I knew it that is while I always prefer h.a.r.d jobs; h.a.r.d jobs that yield raw cash and no one can mess up with me. If I were there I would strike (53).

This ill treatment of the masses by the political elites often results to class struggle, then violence among the competing social classes. Chief Aggrandi belong to elite class; the 'haves' while Ofong and Deje belong to the 'haves not'. The conflict between the two classes often leads to violence and acts of terrorism. It is this kind of conflict between the political classes and the masses that degenerated to the birth of an Islamic sect in the North-Eastern part of the country. Chief Aggrandi in the *Giddy Festival* is likened to Chief Isokipiri Erekosima, the Honourable Commissioner for Local Government, Rural Development and Chieftaincy Affairs in *Hangmen Also Die*. Both of them share the same qualities as corrupt political leaders that siphon the common wealth of the people for selfish gain. Thus, it is Osita Ezenwanebe's vision that unless there is a leadership switch and all forms of human exploitation of the masses is addressed; the act of violence terror cannot be nipped.

There seems to be no short-term solution to insurgencies or the best form of counterterrorism. Even when their leader is killed another leader will emerge. Because it is a battle of the mind and ideas, under the platform of religious belief, winning such battle does not depend on innovative military equipment and number of soldiers, it starts with the mind-set of the terrorist group and their ideological and religious believe. The fourth wave which Boko Haram belongs, exploits Islam as a bases for their operational guidelines. But it is important to note that religious group can exist for a long time and its ideology cannot easily be forgotten. However, there is hope and possible solutions for nipping any act of terror in Nigeria. This hope is not found in the military hardware, neither in the number of skilled military personnel. This hope is not found in monetary negotiation and exchange of terror captives with kidnapped victims. This hope is not found in using terrorism as an avenue to gain political scores; but it is found in the discovery of perceived grievances of the terrorist group and an avenue that gives rise to such grievances should be addressed. It is only then, we can end not only any form of violence and act of terrorism, but discover the humanity in ourselves.

### **Conclusion**

From the above enquiry, violence is as old as man, and conflict is found in every part of human existence especially in drama and theatre. But the act of terrorism with an intention of causing fear, destruction of lives and properties is a crime that dehumanises the humanity in our collective existence. This act is traced back to the period of anarchist, which was the first wave of terrorist act to modern period that is witnessing a much more fundamentalist religious extremism as part of the fourth wave. Terrorism can be carried out by individuals, groups or state actors to achieve their objectives, instil fear or for revenge. The terror act of 11 September, 2001, at the World Trade Centre in New York and consequent attack in Washington though not the first act of terrorism on record, show that non state perpetrators aggravated by religion can use violence to pursue their objectives.

Using Esiaba Irobi's *Hang Men Also Die* and Osita Ezenwanebe's *Giddy Festival*, as a benchmark and grounded on Karl Marx's historical materialism, it can be concluded that, deprivation, Marxist ideology and corruption on the part of the ruling class have been responsible for continuous violence conflict and terrorism in Nigeria space. To nip the act of terror on the bud in Nigeria, it is important to look at the avenue that gave birth to such act. It is Esiaba Irobi and Osita Ezenwanebe's vision that not only corruption must be stamped out, but also the inequality gap must be reduced, by creating an enabling environment and opportunities for the youths and minimising leadership of exclusion. That is the best form of counter-terrorism that can be used to nip the act of terror from the bud in Nigeria as a geopolitical space and to rediscover our humanity and peaceful coexistence.

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