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**ANTON WILHELM AMO, FROM
A GHANAIAN
SLAVE-CHILD TO A GERMAN
PROFESSOR
AND PHILOSOPHER**

By

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1. INTRODUCTION

The world shares its great people: musicians, philosophers, mathematicians, scientists, writers and prophets, be they Mozart, Aristotle, Cicero, Socrates, Einstein, Shakespeare, Puschkin, Goethe, Hafes or religious leaders. The fame or glory won by such people was sometimes accidental and sometimes preconditioned and respected no racial or geographical boundaries. For the development of humankind such great personalities have been role models and torch-bearers. Therefore, under no circumstances should their teachings and works be cast into oblivion and keep secret from people desirous of physical and mental growth.

During the era of the slave trade and the scramble () for colonies in Africa attempts were made to underrate the glorious deeds of great African personalities¹. Thus, Africa could be declared a dark continent. Its inhabitants were considered as backward and primitive people. This enabled the detractors to justify in their opinion ethically and economically the sale of more than a hundred million Africans into slavery and the destruction of their cultures. It further justified imperialism and colonialism and the introduction of foreign cultures, racial segregation and the domination of African peoples.

Nevertheless, through resilience African cultures and people have to a large extent survived and are still flourishing. Many Africans, too, have risen from the doldrums and suppression and made outstanding contributions to the development of humankind. More specifically, slaves, the offspring of slaves, and colonised and underrated people have braved the many odds and demonstrated, by their own capabilities and those of their own people. In this regard, we may recall to memory the activities of Memon, Terence of Capitein Coffie, Anthon Wilhelm Amo, Shaka the Zulu, the Queen of Sheba, Yaa Asantewaa,, Martin Luther King Jnr., W.E. Du Bois, Kwame Nkrumah, and Nelson Mandela. Many more have suffered humiliation and paid with their lives for the dignity of their people and the equality of mankind.

This paper purports to outline the works of the first African in relatively modern times, Anton Wilhelm Amo, who, through his remarkable life and outstanding activities as a student, master, lecturer and philosopher at a European University, was able to demonstrate the great capabilities of his people and to uphold their dignity. Special reference will be made to the background and impact of the activities during the period in which he lived and worked.² It is also important to mention the impact of Amo's activities and thoughts on the people he lived and worked with, especially on his fellow Africans.

2. BACKGROUND

Apart from being considered as the cradle of mankind, as being the place where the first human being began to develop, Africa has contributed a great deal in ancient and modern times to the physical, intellectual and spiritual development of humankind. That Africa

now finds itself in many crises and in all manner of apparently insurmountable difficulties cannot be blamed on the inroads of non-Africans alone but also on the many upheavals caused and experienced by the African cultures and peoples themselves. To a small extent one can also refer to natural laws that are universally operative and that account for the fall and rise of cultures and peoples³.

2.1 Africa's early contacts with European Civilisation: 15-18th Century

Africa is often rightly called the cradle of mankind and the source of civilization partly because of its unique early civilizations from which many peoples grew and learned. Early Europeans indeed profited a great deal from civilizations in Ancient Egypt and Ancient Timbuktu just as modern-day Africans are profiting from current European and American development. Nevertheless, the closest contacts that were ever established between Europeans and Africans occurred during the period from 1441 to 1800 which witnessed the transportation of blacks to Europe and especially the flourishing trade contacts, the so-called Transatlantic triangular trade pattern that linked Europe, Africa and the Americas. This trade more than anything else allowed Europe to gain the ascendancy over Africa.

Trade in goods such as gold and other natural resources eventually developed into the lucrative trade in human beings, namely the slave trade.

2.2 Slave Trade

Slavery on the African continent and the tradition of exporting slaves to Arab countries had indeed a long tradition in Africa before the 14th Century⁴. But during the 1400's and 1500's this tradition was organised and regularised when the trade in slaves became extremely lucrative to Europeans. All moral objections to slave trade were abandoned, especially when Europeans believed that the slave trade enabled blacks to reach salvation by being carried away from Africa and converted to Christianity. Thus, such Africans were saved, so to speak, from being damned to eternal perdition. Also, it was widely believed by Europeans that blacks were descended from Ham who had been cursed and were, therefore, condemned to permanent slavery⁵.

During this period slaves who were taken to Europe were mainly employed as domestic servants and semi-skilled artisans. When labour on plantations in the New World increased slaves were shipped in their millions from Europe and Africa to work in the New World. But without the cooperation of African rulers, dignitaries and traders, who served as slave-suppliers, slave trade might not have flourished⁶. Little wonder that when the movement for the abolition of slavery started in the second half of the eighteenth century there was great opposition not only from European traders but also from African, especially Asante and Dahomey, kings.

This trade indeed bereft Africa of many an intellectual, a scientist, a technician, a statesman, a humanist and a pacifist. Many of such actual and potential personalities were transported to Europe and the New World. Some were thrown overboard in times of high sea and stormy weather and some managed to arrive at their destinations. Despite the negative aspects of slavery and slave trade, however, many Africans have risen out of the doldrums to fame. Anton Wilhelm Amo was a shining example.

3. ANTON WILHELM AMO'S LIFE AND WORKS

It is often argued that Anton Wilhem was taken to Europe to study theology and to return to his motherland to preach and to spread the Christian religion. Nevertheless, historical evidence and a careful analysis of his life, the society in which he lived and his works tends to indicate that he was captured like many other blacks of his time and transported as a slave child to Europe.

3.1 Amo's Cultural Background

Amo's cultural background may be described within the framework of the culture of the Nzema people of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. In Ghana the Nzema people inhabit the Western Region that borders on Cote d'Ivoire. They have their own unique culture and social order. The culture and social order of the Nzema people are characterised by chieftaincy, traditional festivals, rituals, taboos, dances, songs, music, clothing, funeral, sacrificial, birth and marriage rites which are peculiar to some extent to the Nzema people and also common to a large extent to Ghanaians and Africans in general. Timothy Ansah, like many Africans, laments the negative impact of foreign cultures which seem to have gnawed "insidiously at the very vital basis of our traditional customs which in the past provided the criteria for important modes of moral behaviour". He tresses the need for his fellow Nzema people to avoid total cultural annihilation by reclaiming the strong footholds in their culture and not mixing their customary practices with base ingredients from foreign cultures. One of the footholds in Nzema culture is the famous Kundum festival which is celebrated every year in August or September by the Nzemas and their neighbours, the Achantas.

The Nzema ethnic group has produced many internationally known, world-famous people and reknowned scholars, some of whom are Anthony William Amo and the first President of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.

3.2 Amo and the Europe of the 18th Century

According to an inscription on Amo's gravestone at the old Dutch fortress of Shama in the Central Region of Ghana Amo lived for a period of about 81 years, i.e. from 1703 to 1784. He was born in 1703 in Awukenu⁸ (Ankonu or Nkubeam) about 4 kilometres south-east of Axim in the Western Region of Ghana. He was snatched from the hands of his parents at the tender age of five and transported to Amsterdam by Sergeant Bodel in

the service of the Dutch West India Company and given as a present to the Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, Anton Ulrich, in 1707. As Anton Wilhelm Amo himself wrote much later, he entered the service of the Duke after Sergeant Bodel's death⁹.

3.2.1 Baptism and confirmation

On 29th June 1707 Amo was baptized into Christianity in the Castle Chapel and christened Anton Wilhelm, a double name comprising one of the Duke's first names Anton and one of the first names of the Duke's son Wilhelm August. He could then be fully accepted as a normal human being. In 1721 he was confirmed in the same chapel and called Anton Wilhelm Rudolph Mohre. 'Rudolph' was the first name of another Duke of Brunswick, the successor of Augustus Wilhelm as the head of the Duchy¹⁰.

3.2.2 Upheavals

At the time of Amo's arrival in Europe there were many upheavals in Europe. There was serious power struggle either within or between European countries and empires, especially England, France, Holland Spain and Germany. Industrial capitalism, the technical revolution and materialism were greatly fostered. And the slave trade blossomed with European countries, e.g. England, Holland, France and Spain, rivaling one another to obtain monopoly of the trade.

Germany, on her part concentrated more on philosophical thoughts than on socio-economic development that was promoted by other European countries. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) and Christian Wolff (1697-1754) became some of Germany's greatest forerunners of classical German philosophy. Other progressive elements were demonstrated in medicine, mathematics, literature, and law. Such development was considered as characteristic of the early period of enlightenment in Europe. On the other hand, pietism was at its peak in Germany. In its fanaticism it opposed progress and science. They also preached ascetic morals and considered any recognition of the ideological values of non-Christians as heresy. This was the Germany into which Amo was brought.

3.2.3 Life at the Royal Court at Wolfenbüttel

Nevertheless, Amo's new abode, the royal court at Wolfenbüttel, accepted Amo wholeheartedly, brought him up, educated him and supported and treated him like a worthy son and an aristocrat. He was educated in accordance with the humanistic spirit of the early Renaissance royal court before he could be sent to the university¹¹. At this juncture, it is important to note that the Duke, Anton Ulrich, who loved education, was himself open-minded and philanthropic, a novelist and a song writer and believed that all races should be given equal opportunity. It is also probable that his open-mindedness towards black people was the positive consequence of his association with the then Czar of Russia, Peter the Great. His daughter was married to the Car of Russia, Peter the

Great. His daughter was married to the Czar's son. Shortly before Amo's arrival, the Czar had received as a present from the Russian Ambassador to Turkey an Ethiopian, a young black boy, he had baptized and christened Ibrahim Hannibal Petrowitsch who soon became the Czar's private secretary and later an artillery general of the Russian army. It is of great interest to know that a girl of royal blood was given in marriage to Hannibal, thus 'raising' the image of the black slave very high. It is also worthy to note that this mixed marriage accounted for Hannibal's being the great-grand father of Putschkin,¹² the great Russian writer.

3.2.4 University Education: Halle

Anton Wilhelm Amo was so brilliant that despite the new environment and several odds he was eventually immatriculated as a student at the University of Halle on June 6, 1727. The University of Halle was established in 1694 and became famous for promoting enlightenment and the propagation of tolerance through its renowned professors, such as Christian Thomasius, Just Henning Boemer, Nikolaus Hieronymus Gundhing, Friedrich Hoffmann, Johann Peter von Ludewig and August Herman Franke, who had died shortly before Amo's arrival. For instance, the philosopher, Christian Thomasius, was the first person to hold his lectures in the German language and to recommend to the Prussian Emperor, Frederick the Great, the termination of the hunting and persecution of witches. It was probably owing to the fame, the positive nature and open-minded attitude of the professors at Halle that the Duke decided to send Amo there to study instead of to the University of Helmstedt that was closer to the royal court. At any rate, two years after his immatriculation Amo completed his preliminary studies with his first disputation in Latin entitled "De Jure Maurorum in Europa" (The Rights of Blacks in Europe), which was indeed an identity with the peoples of his native continent.

3.2.5 Life in Wittenberg

Amo was unhappy about the negative attitude of the pietists. Thus, in September 1730, Amo went to the University of Wittenberg to do graduate studies. In Wittenberg, where he lived in the Renaissance House, Mittelstrasse 18. Here, he joined the representatives of the enlightenment, such as Christian Wolff and applied himself intensively to the study of the natural sciences: he mastered Logic, Metaphysics, Physiology, Astronomy, History, Law, Theology, Politics and Medicine. He wrote and spoke six languages: English, French, Dutch, Latin, Greek and German. In April 1734 he successfully defended his inaugural dissertation in the Great Hall of the University of Wittenberg. His dissertation was published under the title "De Humanae Mentis Apatheia" (The Absence of Sensation and the Faculty of Sense in the Human Mind and their Presence in our Organic and Living Body) which, with its arguments from the fields of philosophy and medicine, took up a stand in favour of modified materialism and was probably the earliest published work by a Black African in a European language.

3.2.6 Return to Halle

Amo returned to Halle in 1735 and rejoined his teacher and patron, von Ludewig. Amo lectured all manner of subjects at this university. In July 1736 was appointed assistant professor at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Halle and soon chaired sessions defending doctoral theses, e.g. that of Johannes Theodosius Meiner, with a theme close to Amo's thesis and making the distinction between mind and our organic and living body. He saw common ground between the natural sciences and philosophy. This attitude of mind determined his later works. His lectures were compiled into his magnum opus "Tractatus de Arte Sobrie et Accurate Philosophandi" (Treatise on the Art of Philosophising Soberly and Accurately) which was published in Halle in 1738.

3.2.7 Life in Jena

Amo moved to the University of Jena in 1740 where he continued to lecture in philosophy. Amo's stay in Jena was characterised by dissatisfaction, loneliness and frustration. Especially as his supporter the Duke of Brunswick, Anton Ulrich, had died and the troublous times of the mid-century were detrimental to his efforts in fostering enlightenment. The enlightenment subsequently declined and jeopardized his raison d'être and his livelihood at the University as a defender of human rights and justice and as a University professor. Also, intellectual backwardness, radical prejudice, nationalistic arrogance of Germans and loneliness finally drove Amo back to his native land. On December 1746 Anton Wilhelm Amo requested that he be allowed to return with the first Dutch company's ship to his country. He was, therefore, permitted "to travel as a passenger, free of charge, to Guinea by the Company's ship the Catharina Galley"¹³ a slave ship. The said ship reached the Gold Coast in April 1747. It is, therefore, most probable that Amo left Germany in 1746 to return to his motherland and was no longer in Germany when some of the most destructive criticisms and ridicules were leveled against him in 1747.

3.3 Amo's return to the Land of his Fathers

Amo's return to his birthplace, and his life and death thereafter are shrouded with many mysteries. The Dutch colonial rule that oppressed his country was unacceptable to him. It is most probable that struggle against the still flourishing slave trade by this author of "De Jure Maurorum in Europa" was considered as dangerous to the most prominent culprits, the Dutch. (Notice that his own brother was a slave in the Dutch colony of Surinam). According to a report by a traveler and marine doctor, Henrij Gallandat, who visited him in the Gold Coast in 1753 he was, therefore, taken to a Dutch coastal fortress, the Fort Saint Sebastian in Shama where he finally died in 1784. Much still remains to be researched into the life of Amo, especially with regard to whether he had a life partner and raised a family or not. It is also queer that the archives that I have visited in Germany and in Ghana do not have a single portrait of him.

The life he lived when he returned to his country is also shrouded with mysteries. My personal research in Axim and his native village Awukenu¹⁴ have not yet yielded substantial evidence as to what he did or how he lived when he returned to the Gold Coast. My informants have controversial views even with regard to whether and where he was taken when he was a child. Some believe that he was sent voluntarily to learn how to preach¹⁵. Others contend that he was taken with his mother as a slave to Germany. Others also think the mother died as a slave and Amo was taken to Holland and thereafter to Germany. When he was taken to his last abode, Shama, why he was taken there, how he lived there and especially whether he wrote other works while he lived in his motherland are also still open questions that need to be researched into. Even posthumous reports by European humanists about his life, e.g. the German Johann Friedrich Blumenbach and the French Jacobin, Henri Grégoire, reveal nothing more than his being moved to Shama.¹⁶

3.3.1 “The Rights of Blacks in Europe”¹⁷

Amo did not only observe the situation of black people in Europe. He was a victim himself. Blacks were shipped forcibly to Europe in the first place and used as luxury objects, puppets, servants, artisans, musicians, and objects of curiosity in all royal courts of dukes and kings, especially in Germany, Austria, Denmark, Portugal, Russia and Holland. They were considered to be heathens, wild beings, barbarians and primitive and inferior people. They were, therefore, not comparable to whites. They did not have their own languages or identity and, therefore, enjoyed no human rights or protection. These clichés and prejudices became fixed in the minds of the whites and served as a perfect basis for subjugating black people. Nevertheless, these blacks could be considered in special cases as humans and baptized into Christianity. Thereafter, there were no racial prejudices and no barriers between them and white people. Thus, they could marry white women and raise families.

As an erudite scholar in theology, law, natural sciences and philosophy, Amo argued in his first book “The Rights of Blacks in Europe” that both in terms of natural law and the principles of the then cherished Christian religion, the Blacks of Africa were entitled to all the privileges and rights that Europeans enjoyed on the European continent. He also condemned discrimination, apartheid, racism and white superiority complex also declared unequivocally his stand, namely his affirmation of his identity with his fellow black people. He also discussed the historical and legal sources of the freedom and liberation of black kings from the Roman Emperor and how far the freedom and service of blacks bought by white Christians conformed to the existing laws (Suchier, 1916:4). A disputation of this calibre had never been heard in Halle. A summary of its main argument was, therefore, published in the Weekly Newspaper of Halle, dated November 28, 1729.

3.3.2. “The Absence of Sensation and the Faculty of Sense in the Human Mind” (1734)¹⁸

Amo left the University of Halle to study at the University of Wittenberg soon after his studies at Halle. Through his contact with renowned Wolffian philosophers and the representative of the early enlightenment and his further studies in natural sciences and liberal arts he was able to write a postgraduate dissertation under the title “The Absence of Sensation and the Faculty of Sense in the Human Mind and their Presence in our Organic and Living Body”

In this book, Amo stood for modified mechanical materialism. This was the contemporary controversy between the idealist position and the purely mechanical materialism. He insisted that the capacity to feel and to think or to respond had to have a living or material foundation. In his book he referred to Descartes and Aristotle and in particular to work in motion, energy and physiology. He stated that it is the body and not the soul that perceives human feelings and stressed the dualism of body and soul. Amo wrote in this regard:

“Spirit is to us whatever substance is purely active, immaterial, always gains understanding through itself (i.e. directly), and acts from self-motion and with intention, in regard of an end and goal of which it is conscious to itself” (Amo, 1968:66).

3.3.3 “Treatise on The Art of Philosophising Soberly and Accurately” (1738)

When Wolffianism lost its importance in Wittenberg Amo returned to Halle and was appointed “Dozent” or assistant Professor there. He was warmly welcomed there among his fellow Wolffians in Halle. In Halle Amo’s lectures that he had held in Philosophy at the Universities of Wittenberg and Halle were compiled into a book entitled “Treatise on the Art of Philosophising Soberly and Accurately composed in accordance with his Academic Lectures together with an Essay Concise and Exact on Criticism, Interpretation, Method, the Art of Disputation and other Matters Dealt with in Logic”. This was published in Halle in 1738.

The core of the philosophy in the book is the theory of cognition or epistemology. In it Amo says that the objects of cognition are threefold: mental activities/actions, sensation/feelings and outlined objects. The source of cognition is the object/thing itself; there should be a recognition of the capability of the mind to utilize the acquired knowledge by dint of tools. The mind is substance that is indivisible and simple. In comparison to John Locke Amo contends that there can be nothing in the mind that was not perceived previously by the senses. He especially says that the goal of philosophy or science is perfection with regard to both the soul and the body and not simply contemplative. Philosophy must be practical or else it is sterile.

Amo further attacks pride, egotism, dishonesty and dogmatism. He devotes a part of the book to prejudices. He states that negligence and ignorance help account for prejudice, superficiality, subtlety or mental arrogance and sectarianism. He stresses the love of and zeal for truth and urges somewhat in line with John Locke that one should not take authority for truth but rather truth for authority.

Amo's treatise was a typical philosophical work of the 18th Century and ranked among works of the most progressive German intellectuals of that century. Like the works of other progressive-minded philosophers Amo's work were opposed by the protestant reformists (pietists).

It is important to note that all these works were cast into oblivion when Amo returned to his birthplace in present-day Ghana. They were hardly mentioned even in his former Universities not to talk about Germany and the world at large. But thanks to the curiosity and open-mindedness of an Archivist, Dr. Wolfram Suchier, of the University of Halle in the early twentieth century, his dissertation was discovered in 1916 and published. Since then many scholars have tried to research into Amo's life and works. The most prominent of them are Profs. Burchard Brentjes and Dorothea Sigmund-Schulze of the University of Halle, Leonard A. Jones, Hans Kirsten, Reinhard Koch, Dietmar Schneider, Franz Loeser and William E. Abraham who were all Germans living in the later created German Democratic Republic (GDR) and who wanted to extol the intellectual feats of a rare case. In this regard Prof. Dr. Wolf, former Rector of the merged Martin Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg said in 1968:

“It was only the creation of the German Democratic Republic as the embodiment of a policy of peace, of workers' and peasants' power, of international friendship and a developed socialist community of human beings that provided the conditions for doing justice to Amo's great personality and his services to German national humanist culture” (pg XI).

Occasionally today we read articles in newspapers and journals about Amo.

It is important to note that the former GDR government in collaboration with the government of the Republic of Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah wanted in the 1960's to establish an Anton Wilhelm Amo Foundation at the University of Halle which would among other things award annual scholarships of not less than 2,000 MDA to deserving Ghanaian scholars to research or study in Halle or any part of the GDR. This laudable idea did not materialise because of the military coup in Ghana and Ghana's deviation from socialism and the subsequent lukewarm relationship between Ghana and the GDR.

3.4 Impact of Amo's Works²⁰

The Impact of Amo's life and works on humankind, with special reference to Germans and Africans, may be introduced with the following works of the Rector of the University of Wittenberg in 1734:

“The honour which he has won by his intellectual merits he has increased through his excellent reputation for probity, diligence and erudition which he has demonstrated by his public and private instruction. It was this demeanour that won him much favour among the best and most learned men and enabled him easily to outshine all the students of his own age. Conscious of the honour and inspired by the enthusiasm that these latter showed him, he taught philosophy to a whole series of them privately”(…).

It can be noticed from this quotation that Amo impressed a great deal his teachers and the entire German or even European intellectual community. Firstly, as a professor he was able to instruct many a German student. For instance, on 29th May, 1734, he was able to instruct many a German student. For instance, on 29th May, 1734, he chaired a session in which one of his philosophy students, Johannes Theodosius Meiner of Rochlitz, defended his thesis with a theme similar to Amo's disputation on the distinction between mind and our organic and living body, i.e. “*Disputatio philosophica continens Ideam distinctam eorum efude competent vel Menti vel Corpori nostro vivo et organico*”. He also greatly helped in the development of the enlightenment of Germans in particular and of Europeans at large.

For instance, the great German dramatist, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) became a Librarian in Wolfenbüttel thirty years after Amo had returned to Africa. In the death bed of his wife Lessing wrote a piece of drama “Nathan der Weise” (Nathan the wise Man) in which Amo's ideas and those of the early proponents of the early enlightenment, e.g. the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, were clearly expressed. Lessing pleads in this play for tolerance for all human beings despite their different religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Now, one may rightly ask what Anton Wilhelm Amo or his like means for present day Africans at large and Ghanaians in particular. As a humanist Amo influenced many philanthropists and abolitionists of the obnoxious slave trade. He was quoted for instance by the French philanthropist, Abbé Henri Grégoire, the English philanthropist, Wilson Armistead, and the German philanthropist, Blumenach, in their anti-slavery literature. African American human rights activists made use of his image and his works. References were, for instance, made of him in William J. Simmon's book “Men of Mark” in 1887 and in W.E.B. Du Bois' book “Black Folk, Then and Now” in 1939 and the “Encyclopedia of the Negro” edited by Du Bois and Guy B. Johnson in 1945. No doubt, Amo was also a source of encouragement for African freedom fighters during the colonial days, e.g. Kwame Nkrumah who himself was a Ghanaian, and an Nzima at that,

was highly impressed and encouraged by this great African²¹. Kwame refers to Amo's philosophical thoughts in his book "The Fanfare".

Amo can serve as a constant source of encouragement and inspiration to blacks in their intellectual activities and their fight for liberation from foreign intellectual domination. Unlike other Ghanaian intellectuals in the 19th Century like, Kwasi Boakye, in the present century like Ghanaians spread all over the world seeking greener pastures and often oblivious of their background, Amo cared constantly about his country and his continent and despite the fact that he left his country at a tender age he was proud of his people and felt like part of them. Thus, he finally returned to live in Nzimaland in spite of his past sophisticated life in Europe and the fact that he suffered a great deal of frustration and loneliness in his own country.

Out of gratitude and admiration for Amo's activities monuments have been built to commemorate him. In 1965 the German sculptor, Gerhard Geyer, built statues of an African couple and installed a plaque in front of the Martin-Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg to the memory of Amo. Preparations for an Amo foundation were indeed initiated in the 1960's at the same University and ought to be revived and implemented. In Ghana the Philosophy Department of the University of Ghana has found it necessary to honour Amo by putting up a plaque dedicated by the Martin-Luther University of Halle-Wittenberg "to its former student and lecturer" [Anton Wilhelm Amo] "the great African Philosopher of the modern age". In Axim the Methodist Primary and JSS are dedicated to the memory of Amo. The Ghana Association of Teachers of German (GATG), The Goethe-Institut Inter Nationes and the German Embassy in conjunction with the chief and people of Shama, Axim and Awukenu are making preparations to establish monuments at Amo's birthplace and death place and burial grounds at the fortress in Ghana in Awukenu or Axim and Shama respectively.

However, Ghanaians themselves have carried out very little research into Amo's life and works both in Germany and in Ghana. On August 3, 1995, a Ghanaian student of Philosophy, Politics and Sociology, Edeh Yaovi Emmanuel, at the Gerhard-Mercator University in Duisburg, wrote to the Central Archives in Halle soliciting for information on Amo's "Dissertation Inauguralis de jure Maurorum in Europa" (the right of Blacks in Europe). It is unknown whether he has completed his work or not.

4. CONCLUSION

It is important to note that Africa had a high civilization before its contact with Europe and that Africans and Europeans have exchanged knowledge since that contact. The trading in African slaves had very negative consequences for African historical and cultural development.

Despite many odds during the slave trade a couple of Africans such as Hannibal, Captein Boakye and Amo.

Amo lived an exemplary life for Africans especially Ghanaians. Many philanthropists and freedom fighters have made good use of his works to convince their opponents. He has been a torch-bearer for Africans and is worth emulating to a high degree. But to see this great historical figure more clearly for emulation more work has to be done on him and it is up to the Africans to carry out the research.

5. NOTES

1. Reference is hereby made of Africa's past glory.
2. Despite the fact that Amo was born in an African environment he grew up to maturity in a European context and his thinking was mainly modeled by the way he lived and the experiences he had in Europe. Obviously he was also influenced to a great extent by European thought.
3. Great African cultures that rose and fell were those of Ancient Kingdoms, such as Egypt, Mali, Songhai, Ghana, Dahomey, Yoruba, Moose and Ashanti.
4. Mention ought to be made here of the slavery that flourished in, for instance, Mauritania and Sudan.
5. Reference must be made here to the Bible passage and the way it was used by Christian slave traders, imperialists and colonialists, especially in the Americas and South Africa to perpetuate the domination of the black race and Apartheid.
6. The contribution of Africans was immense. Refer to documents well known and Ayi Kwei Armah's historical novel "Three Thousand Seasons".
7. Quote sources discussing the reasons for Amo's travel to Europe. Contrasts or examples of other Ghanaians or Africans.
8. 'Awukenu' is an Nzima word which means 'compound'. The first people who settled there felt that they lived together in a family compound.
9. See Rijksarchief (Den Haag), reference WIC 1.05.01.02,401, Register op de notulen van de kamer Amsterdam 1746 fol. 124. I am grateful to Prof. Adam T. Jones of the Institute of African Studies of the University of Leipzig for his invaluable help in digging out information on Amo for me and, especially, for the translation of the original Dutch text into English.
10. The German term 'Mohr' in this context means 'black man'. It is interesting to note that the African name 'Amo' was omitted. This was probably due to its pagan source (see Hountondji, 1996: 113).
11. If Amo worked in the service of the Duke what he did precisely has not been properly documented. At any rate, he was recorded as having received certain amounts as remuneration or allowance.
12. Dilate a bit on Puschkin.
13. Rijksarchief (Den Haag), ref. WIC 1.05.01.02,401, register op de notulen van de kamer Amsterdam 1746 fol. 124.
14. I have so far visited this village, where Anton Wilhelm Amo was supposed to have been born, for five times. No doubt, even the oldest people still living in the village know very little about Amo. Apparent relatives in Axim (including the chiefs) have a vague idea about Amo's life story. They refer more confidently to documents provided by German researchers who some would want us to believe are the offspring of Amo.
15. cf. Hountondji, 1996: 110-113.
16. *ibid.*
17. *ibid.*
18. The full original name in Latin was "Dissertatio inauguralis de jure maurorum in Europa".

19. Hountondji gives a relatively thorough analysis of Amo's "De humanae mentis apatheia" (see Hountondji, 1996: 118-130).
20. To obtain the full impact of Amo's works on his fellow human beings one has to start from the royal court where he lived and analyse situations till the time that he died in Shama in his homeland. For reasons of lack of space and time it is only possible to give a gist of this influence.
21. Reference is also made here to the fact that preparations were being made in the 1960's in the former German Democratic Republic to establish a scholarship scheme for Ghanaians who wished to study Philosophy in the German Democratic Republic. The preparations yielded no fruit when the first President of Ghana, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, who, like Amo, belonged to the Nzema ethnic group, was ousted through a military coup d'etat in 1966 and the matter was not pursued by subsequent governments.

Anton Wilhelm Amo or Anthony William Amo (c. 1703 – c. 1759) was an African philosopher originally from what is now Ghana. Amo was a professor at the universities of Halle and Jena in Germany after studying there. Brought to Germany by the Dutch West India Company in 1707 as a child-slave, and given as a gift to Dukes August Wilhelm and Ludwig Rudolph von Wolfenbüttel, he was treated as a member of the family by their father Anthony Ulrich, Duke of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. Amo was the first African-born philosopher, physician, natural phenomena, intellectual tolerance. Discover the world's research. 17+ million members. Anton Wilhelm Amo (1703-1784) was a Ghanaian who was taken to Germany as a child, studied at the Universities of Halle (1727-1729) and Wittenberg (1730-1734) and later taught at the Universities of Wittenberg, Halle and at the University of Jena. He received his Doctor in Philosophy in 1734 Wittenberg (Abraham 2004; Bemile 2002; Blakeley 1997; Jahn 1968; Amo 1734/2012). Duke Wilhelm had died in 1731 without children and was succeeded by his brother Ludwig Rudolph. Ludwig died shortly after in 1735, him also without heirs. William Abraham, *The Life and Times of Anton Wilhelm Amo*, Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, Vol. 1. The truth is, Amo's philosophical work was ignored by other Jena-based German intellectuals such as Schiller, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel. It was only due to the advocacy and influence of Nkrumah (who was a Nzema like Amo) and William Abraham in the 1960s that German institutions began recognising the figure and scholarship of the philosopher and polymath Anton Wilhelm Amo Afer. A full size statue has been dedicated to him in 1965 at the University of Halle-Wittenberg. We're not sure when Anton Wilhelm started using his Nzema name, Amo. At his confirmation, the church records in Wolfenbüttel call him Anton Wilhelm Rudolph Mohre; Mohr (Moor) being one of the ways Germans then referred to Africans. But in later life he often called himself Anton Wilhelm Amo Afer, using the word for African in Latin, which was the language of European scholarship. So he wanted to be known as Amo the African. He won eminent admirers. The great physicist and philosopher Martin Gotthelf Loeschner, who examined his thesis at the University of Wittenberg, spoke of the Gold Coast as "the mother . . . of the most auspicious minds," and added Anton Wilhelm Amo (c. 1700 – c. 1750) "born in West Africa, enslaved, and then gifted to the Duke of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel" became the first African to earn a Ph.D. in philosophy at a European university. He went on to teach philosophy at the Universities of Halle and Jena. On the 16th of April, 1734, at the University of Wittenberg, he defended his dissertation, *De Humanae Mentis Apatheia* (On the Impassivity of the Human Mind), in which Amo investigates the logical inconsistencies in René Descartes' (1596 – 1650) *res cogitans* (mind) and *res extensa* (body) distinction and interaction by