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## Shirley graham Du Bois-the activism of the unsung civil right activist in Ghana from 1963-1965

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### Abstract

There is a plethora of literature that uncover the contribution of men to civil rights activism across the world. Civil rights activism in the United States of America and Africa are often touted to have been orchestrated by men including but not limited to, W.E.B Du Bois, Martin Luther King Junior, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Patrice Lumumba etc. It is so nauseating that little attention has been given to the significant efforts played by some women who were resolute in promoting civil rights activism aimed at mitigating social injustice, inequality, women's subordination, among others. One of such unsung women activists whose contributions shaped the landscape of civil rights activism not only in the United States of America but also in Africa, especially Ghana, was Shirley Graham Du Bois. This article focused on the work and contribution of Shirley Graham Du Bois; a civil rights activist and an international socialist in the development of socialism and women's issues in the newly independent Ghana using her role as the Director of the then Ghana Television and her integral contribution to the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation. The study relied greatly on primary sources from the Ghana archives and literature on Shirley Graham Du Bois. This paper examines her contribution to politics in Ghana, her role in Ghana's evolution, as well as her strides toward women's movement and empowerment. Her contribution is no mean an achievement; her coming to Ghana became a watershed in the promotion of civil rights activism in Ghana. The paper concludes that through the programs enrolled on Ghana Television, the citizens were conscientized to be nationalists and fight imperialism, and women were trained and prepared using the model of the women's movement at the time.

**Keywords:** Shirley graham Du Bois, civil right activist, Ghana

### Introduction

Women's activism has mostly been overshadowed by their male counterparts. Black American women played important roles in the civil right activism in the United States and worked hand in hand with their male counterparts. Shirley Graham Du Bois was an important civil right activist in the United States of America although she is not well known in the United States of America as an activist today. Shirley Graham's<sup>[1]</sup> activism began at a very young age, at age thirteen, Graham penned her first editorial in Indianapolis newspaper because she was prevented to enter the YWCA swimming pool. Shirley Graham Du-Bois<sup>2</sup> was a civil rights activist before W.E.B. Du Bois wedded her, but she is primarily recognized as William Edward Burghardt Du Bois's wife. It is worthwhile to assert that, Shirley Graham got to know W.E B Du Bois during her childhood days.

When Shirley Graham Du Bois was young, on one of her visits to her father's house, she got to know W.E.B Du Bois. It was during the early part of the fifth decade of the twentieth century (1940s) that Shirley Graham and W.E.B Du Bois became close associates. They shared similar ideals and beliefs. It is pertinent to add that, W.E.B Du Bois and Shirley Graham Du Bois married on February 27, 1951. The next decade after their marriage, the couple struggled with legal battles. W.E.B Du Bois was alleged to have had connection to the Communist Party in Russia. Consequently, they renounced their citizenship, became Ghanaian citizens and settled in Ghana.

Shirley Graham Du Bois did not gain much attention until Gerald Horne published

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<sup>1</sup> Shirley Graham and Graham Du Bois will be used interchangeably to refer to Shirley Graham Du Bois.

The Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois in the year 2000. Due to her complexities-as an activist, a writer, playwright, an international figure, and a composer of the Tom-Tom, Shirley Graham Du Bois had become a well-known figure in American media. However, little information is available on her travels and life outside America, even though she was an international woman who regularly visited countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa. This article will shed light on Shirley Graham Du Bois life in Ghana, particularly how she contributed to the country's growing activism and improving women's status. In this paper, we argue that through the shows Shirley Graham Du Bois enrolled on Ghana Television and streamed on the radio, Shirley Graham Du Bois promoted civil rights advocacy and women's position in Ghana.

Shirley Graham Du Bois had to take care of her husband and stand in to perform national roles that her husband had to perform in Ghana because her husband was old and weak. The above meant that she worked closely with Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana and became known as the mother of Kwame Nkrumah. Shirley Graham was given numerous roles in the development of Ghana and in making Ghana achieve the status Nkrumah desired. One of the significant roles Shirley Graham played was becoming the Director of Ghana Television. This paper will answer questions such as: What political roles did Shirley Graham Du Bois play in Ghana? Did Shirley Graham Du Bois contribute to Ghana's evolution? How did Graham Du Bois contribute to the women's movement and the empowerment of Ghanaian women? The main argument of this paper is that Shirley Graham contributed to the development of a recently independent Ghana through her work at Ghana Television where she promoted education. She argued that independence alone was not enough for the country's development; rather education was needed to promote the development of the country and to make Ghana self-dependent. Another argument this paper makes is that Shirley Graham Du Bois contributed to the women's movement in Ghana and enhanced the status of Ghanaian women by placing influential women's programs on the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (The countries only radio and TV station). The Ghana Broadcasting Corporation Streamed the television programs on the radio and had television points around the country. Access to programs by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation was easy because markets had systems that provided sellers with news and all other programs. We establish the above by situating Shirley Graham Du Bois in the period she lived in Ghana, and the extent of activism at the time, Shirley Graham contributed to the development of women issues. Therefore, Shirley Graham Du Bois was a gender activist during her time, this stand diverts from early history that argues that she was less a gender activist.

### Historiography

The study on Shirley Graham Du Bois has taken multiple approaches. Shirley Graham Du Bois is studied as an activist before her marriage to W.E.B Du Bois. Shirley Graham Du Bois is sometimes studied through her early professions as a composer and a novelist. Graham Du Bois's international personality is another approach used to study her. Finally, her political alignment is another lens through which Graham-Du Bois is studied.

Shirley Graham Du Bois' professional life has received

attention in recent scholarship, with authors highlighting her trailblazing role as the first Black American woman to write and stage an opera with an all-Black cast. Caroline Budnick has published an article on Shirley Graham's training to become a trailblazer, the role of Oberlin College in her training, and the significance of Karamu House in the first opera titled *Tom Tom: An Epic of Music and the Negro*.<sup>[3]</sup> *The Artistry and Activism of Shirley Graham Du Bois: A Twentieth Century African American Torchbearer* discusses Shirley Graham Du Bois from a decade before her birth to the mid-twentieth century. The dissertation examined the significant cultural production that Shirley Graham contributed to American society. The dissertation captures Shirley Graham's musical concerts and their beauty and spiritual significance. Again, her role in the arts industry, such as Graham Du Bois's role as the Director of the Chicago Black Unit for the Theatre Project, and her different educational journey is discussed in the dissertation. The dissertation discussed Graham Du Bois's civil rights activism, such as serving as the field secretary for the NAACP. The dissertation ended with her marriage to W.E.B. Du Bois and the Du Bois marital role she took on afterward<sup>[4]</sup>.

Using the international lens to write on Graham-Du Bois, the article *W.E.B. And Shirley Graham Du Bois in Maoist China* discusses the Du Bois family's relationship with the Chinese government<sup>[5]</sup>. The article discusses how the relationship between China and the Du Bois name continued even after Du Bois died. Yunxiang Gao focuses on the interactions between Shirley Du Bois and the Chinese government and her sympathetic political action towards action. *Pan Africanism, Shirley Du Bois, and Nkrumah's Ghana* this article discuss the political life of Shirley Graham Du Bois in Africa and her association with socialism<sup>[6]</sup>. When Shirley Graham was in Ghana, she promoted socialism through her discussions and even decided not to accept any advertisements on Ghana television. *The Mother and the Mistress, and the Cover Girls* also discusses the professional media role of Shirley Graham Du Bois and how she used this role to promote African decolonization<sup>[7]</sup>.

The activist life of Shirley Graham Du Bois until her marriage to Du Bois was written by Dee Thompson in his dissertation titled. *A Socio-biography of Shirley Graham-Du Bois: A Life in the Struggle*.<sup>[8]</sup> In this dissertation, he argued that the activism of Shirley Graham Du Bois began as early as age thirteen and not with her marriage to W.E.B.

<sup>3</sup> Caroline Budnick, *Operatic Intentions: Shirley Graham Du Bois and Karamu House*, *On Second Thought*, no. 14 (October 1, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> *The artistry and Artistry and Activism of Shirley Graham Du Bois: A Twentieth Century African American Torchbearer*, Alesia Elaine McFadden

<sup>5</sup> Yunxiang Gao, *W. E. B. And Shirley Graham Du Bois in Maoist China*, *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 10, no. 1 (2013): pp. 59-85.

<sup>6</sup> Abayomi Azikiwe, *Pan-Africanism, Shirley Graham Du Bois and Nkrumah's Ghana: Pambazuka News*, *Pan-Africanism, Shirley Graham Du Bois and Nkrumah's Ghana* | *Pambazuka News*, March 16, 2017, <https://www.pambazuka.org/pan-africanism/pan-africanism-shirley-graham-du-bois-and-nkrumah%E2%80%99s-ghana>.

<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Blaylock, *The Mother, the Mistress, and the Cover Girls*, *Feminist Media Histories* 8, no. 1 (January 2022): pp. 102-133.

<sup>8</sup> Robert Dee Thompson, *A Socio-Biography of Shirley Graham-Du Bois: A Life in the Struggle* (dissertation, 1997).

Du Bois. Alesia Elaine McFadden uses a similar approach, she argued that Shirley Graham's activism had begun earlier in her life, and she used her profession to promote equality before her marriage to W.E.B. Du Bois.<sup>[9]</sup>

From the above discussions of some of the few literatures on Shirley Graham Du Bois, it is quite clear that, there is little to no examination of the activist role of Shirley Graham Du Bois in Ghana. The closest discussion on Shirley Graham Du Bois in Ghana is her role as a director of the Ghana television, however, the connection to her activist role and contribution to women's movement at the time is not clearly established. This article will fill in the gap on the study of Shirley Graham Du Bois, and present her activist role in the newly independent Ghana.

### Methodology

This research paper is a primary source-driven paper; therefore, primary sources will be used to make arguments that will allow the broad goal of the paper to be achieved. The primary sources will encompass newspapers on Ghana Television and Shirley Graham Du Bois; letters written by Shirley Graham Du Bois to Nkrumah and other relatives; and articles and books that Shirley Graham Du Bois wrote. These sources will be accessed from the National Archives of Ghana, Online Archives, and the Western Illinois University library. These primary sources will be supplemented by secondary sources on Shirley Graham Du Bois's existence in Ghana and her role as a director of Ghana television.

### Political Activism of Shirley Graham Du Bois

Before Shirley Graham Du Bois came to permanently stay in Ghana, she had met with Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah in Washington when he visited the United States of America in January 1958 to give an elaborate reception after leading Ghana to attain independence<sup>[10]</sup>. This was the occasion where Shirley Graham Du Bois figuratively adopted Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana as her son. After this meeting, Shirley Graham Du Bois travelled to Accra to represent her husband at the first All-African Peoples' conference in Accra<sup>[11]</sup>. At this conference, Shirley Graham Du Bois gave a speech which had been authored by W.E.B Du Bois<sup>[12]</sup>. During the inauguration of Kwame Nkrumah as the first president of Ghana, a letter was sent to invite Dr. W.E.B Du Bois and Shirley Graham Du Bois to attend the inauguration, which was happily accepted by the couples<sup>[13]</sup>. It was during this visit that Nkrumah of Ghana formally requested that W.E.B Du Bois began an encyclopedia Africana and also relocate to Ghana with his family. In Ghana and during the time when Dr. Du Bois was alive, the president of Ghana was regular at the Du Bois home and the two families shared multiple dinners together<sup>[14]</sup>. Shirley Graham Du Bois travelled with President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana to the first summit conference of all African heads of state in the president's private plane to Addis Ababa where she served as a reporter and a personal assistant to

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah<sup>[15]</sup>. It was during this summit that gave birth to the Organization of African Union. Shirley wrote that I was only one of the few who wrote about it-using proud, glowing words...<sup>[16]</sup>. With the death of WEB Du Bois, Shirley Graham continued with the important work for Ghana and became much closer to Nkrumah<sup>[17]</sup>. Shirley Graham Du Bois came to be seen by Nkrumah as a person who he could trust because of her wide exploration and her experience with important political figures around the world<sup>[18]</sup>. With her position as the Director of Ghana Television, Shirley Graham travelled outside Ghana to study where she made political connections for Ghana, she also had the opportunity to be visited and meet with statemen during her time at this position allowing her to negotiate for Ghana. She had dinner with visiting dignitaries such as Zhou En-lai, conferences with ambassadors from Japan and the Soviet Union, cocktails with the Nigerian high commissioner, and dinner with the Cuban ambassador<sup>[19]</sup>. Shirley Graham Du Bois was trained to run the Ghana television to reflect on Ghana's socialist aspirations and that is what she did<sup>[20]</sup>. Shirley promoted her political ideas of socialism with her position as the Director when she decided that there were not going to be any commercials on the Ghana television<sup>[21]</sup>. Also to make Ghana independent and self-sufficient, she ensured that 85% of the television programs were made in Ghana<sup>[22]</sup>. This action was to break the flow and control of the West over programming and to reduce their profit streams. Shirley Graham Du Bois was invited to represent Ghana at an important continent of Africa Conference meeting in Senegal<sup>[23]</sup>. Her representative role for Ghana, suggest her important position in the country, an individual who could stand in for the government and for Ghana as a country<sup>[24]</sup>. Shirley Graham Du Bois played the important role as the advisor to President Kwame Nkrumah and deliberated with the president in other to help him make some of the important decisions for his government. Although most of these discussions were not opened and thereby limits the sources to buttress these, Shirley Graham wrote in one of her papers that, for the first time in my life I am really part of a dynamic, progressive government which is doing something every day. AFRICA is leading the way! I am most fortunate and happy to be in the front ranks.<sup>[25]</sup> This statement from Graham Du Bois suggests and affirms the close relationship she had with the Nkrumah government, and how she thought her advice and contribution to the development of the country is productive. In helping Nkrumah and Ghana build the younger independent country, Graham Du Bois invited and lured some important individuals from around the world to Ghana to help build the country.

Ella Winter and her husband Donald Ogden Stewart were

<sup>15</sup> Graham, His Days, 343.

<sup>16</sup> Shirley, Graham-Du Bois, The liberation of Africa: Power Peace and Justice. The Black Scholar, 2(6), February 1971, 33.

<sup>17</sup> Herbert, Aptheker, Notes on Du Boiss Final Years. 2020, 78.

<sup>18</sup> Race Woman, 175.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Nana, Merya, The Ghanaian Times, August 17, 1965, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Race Woman, 176.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Race Woman, 179.

<sup>24</sup> During this time, Shirley Graham Du Bois had already naturalized for Ghana in 1961 and was a Ghanaian citizen

<sup>25</sup> Race Woman, 179.

<sup>9</sup> Mcfadden, The artistry and Artistry and Activism of Shirley Graham Du Bois.

<sup>10</sup> Shirley, Graham, His Days are Marching On, Philadelphia and New York: J.B Lippincott Company, 1971, 298.

<sup>11</sup> Graham, His Days, 300.

<sup>12</sup> Graham, His Days, 304.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Graham, His Days, 343.

invited to Ghana by Graham Du Bois and President Kwame Nkrumah to assist in the training of writers for television.<sup>[26]</sup> In bringing Winter, Graham Du Bois had to use enticing words because Winter did not want to come to Ghana, and to talk of stay for a longer time, Graham had to use words like marvelous Ella and remind her of how Ghana has become the front line of the world's progress<sup>[27]</sup>. Graham Du Bois also extended invitation to William Gardener Smith from France to come to Ghana to help organize the news department<sup>[28]</sup>.

On October 20, 1966, eight months after the overthrow of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana, Shirley Graham Du Bois wrote a letter to Dr. Kwame Nkrumah asserting her continuous support for Nkrumah's vision of vindicating and defending Africa against neocolonialism. As part of the letter she wrote:

In everything I do, write or say,  
I think of myself as your ambassador,  
faithfully representing the true Ghana<sup>[29]</sup>.

The contribution to the political and national development of Ghana by Shirley Graham Du Bois, during and after the death of W.E.B Du Bois cannot be overemphasized; she played great roles in the development of Ghana.

### **Promoting Nationalism and Development in Ghana through the Media**

Shirley Graham Du Bois became the director of the Ghana Television on February 1, 1964 and held the position until February 24, 1966. Before Graham Du Bois came to take up this position, she was sent to Great Britain, France, Italy, the German Democratic Republic, Czechoslovakia and Japan to learn television systems and techniques to promote socialism and to enhance the development of Ghana and Africa. Graham Du Bois knew what she was doing when she introduced educative programs on the Ghana Television to promote nationalism and development in Ghana. When Shirley Graham Du Bois was in France after completing her study in Britain, she wrote to Nkrumah that Television is today recognized as the most powerful, useful, and effective medium of communication devised by Man.<sup>[30]</sup> Signifying that the use of the Ghana television to imbibe patriotism, enlighten the population of their right and promote African Unity was going to be easier than all other means available. Shirley Graham also proclaimed that the television we are planning will be a tremendous channel for education, for increased understanding and for developing and unifying the people of Africa<sup>[31]</sup>. Graham Du Bois also revealed that the television station would fight against imperialism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism across the continent by resurrecting forgotten glories of African history, of African culture.<sup>[32]</sup>

These different statements and proclamation that Graham

Du Bois made about the television station in Ghana was going to be a tool for nationalism and bring about African Unity. These views of Graham Du Bois was echoed by President Kwame Nkrumah during the inauguration of the Ghana television, he charged the employees of the Ghana Television that:

All who are employed in our television service and our sound Broadcasting Service have a unique opportunity therefore, to play a vital role in the development of Ghana in our struggle to eradicate from our society superstition, ignorance, and illiteracy, and create in the minds of our people, through television and broadcasting, an awareness of the benefits to Ghana of modern science and technology<sup>[33]</sup>.

The programs that were telecasted on the televisions were also streamed on the radio, and there were programs for literacy<sup>[34]</sup>. As a result of the low technological development and how scarce television and radio was, Graham Du Bois and her team brought out distribution methods such as community viewing centers to make television and radio program accessible to all.

Some educative programs that were introduced to the television and the radio to increase nationalism and make the citizens aware of things ongoing in the society included, everyday English, yesterday in parliament, today in parliament, let's speak English, African News and News Talk, Asafo music and educational programs in the major Ghanaian dialects<sup>[35]</sup>. Let's speak English as a radio and television program was used to teach English on the radio and television by making sentences in Twi and the other major languages and translating such sentences in English for listeners to get the meaning of English since it was the official language of the country. Today in parliament was a program to bring the population closer to government and make them active participants in the country's development. By making the population aware of what was going on in parliament, it made them feel part of the government, and allowed them to know what to do and what not to do because laws made were readily relayed to them. The African News which was broadcasted periodically connected Ghana to the other parts of Africa and instilled the unity that was needed among Ghanaians and Africans. To increase nationalism and to promote the independence, the Asafo music (traditional songs that promote nationalism) was part of the programs on the television and on the radio to inculcate a national sense among the population. Some programs that were solely on the television included the children program, language and literacy, farms and fisheries<sup>[36]</sup>. The children program was just like the one the Japan Broadcasting Corporation visited Ghana to undertake in 1964 from November 7<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup><sup>[37]</sup>. The children program discussed activities of the youth, the educational system and how to improve it, the development in the educational system, and how children and the youth survived in the country<sup>[38]</sup>. In the inauguration speech of Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah he revealed how the Friedrich Ebert Foundation will coordinate with the staff of Ghana Television in

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Race Woman, 182.

<sup>28</sup> Race Woman, 183.

<sup>29</sup> Emmanuella, Amoh, International Gullah Geechee and African Diaspora Conference, 2020, 14.

<sup>30</sup> Shirley Graham Du Bois, Letter from France to Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah, November 13, 1963.

<sup>31</sup> Wants to start a revolution, Radical women in Black Freedom Struggle, 107.

<sup>32</sup> The mother and the mistress, 107

<sup>33</sup> Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah Inauguration of Ghana Television Service. July 31, 1965.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> This is Radio Ghana. May 29, 1964, 9.

<sup>36</sup> The Ghanaian Times, This is Radio Ghana, August 17, 1965, 13.

<sup>37</sup> Nippon Hoso Kyokai.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

producing films on all aspect of science and technical training, agricultural techniques and practical lessons for homes and schools <sup>[39]</sup>. The farm and fisheries programs were successful through the rural broadcasting that was began in the 1962 and was sustained during the period when Graham Du Bois was the Director of Ghana television <sup>[40]</sup>. The broadcasting staffs provided special programs that could help the rural communities increase their crops. The program featured agricultural news, interviews with successful farmers and fishermen, talks by experts on new techniques of farming and nutrition <sup>[41]</sup>. These programs enhanced economic development and helped farmers and fishermen, make the best out of their profession. The television and radio programs brought the population closer to the government, and the localized nature of the television and radio programs allowed the population to be away from the influence of the colonial masters. The educational and cultural-focused programs helped promote nationalism and the country's development.

### **Presenting Shirley Graham Du Bois as a Woman Activist**

Shirley Graham Du Bois as a person is a person that can be looked up to for motivation and as a woman who broke barriers. In Ghana, she held the position that no woman had ever held at the time in the world, the Director of Ghana television <sup>[42]</sup>. Strikingly, Shirley Graham Du Bois coupled with Marais as heads of Programing at Ghana Television, was a clear evidence that women could equally serve as heads of important state institutions <sup>[43]</sup>. It was a good precedent for women empowerment. She also gave talks at places where male speakers were dominant such as representing and speaking on behalf of her husband at the First conference of independent African States <sup>[44]</sup>.

Shirley Graham Du Bois participated in the early African and Ghanaian women movements in ways that she could, and promoted women issues with the programs she enrolled on the Ghana Television. Graham Du Bois attended the first international meeting of women of African descent which was organized by the National Federation of Gold Coast Women under the General-Secretaryship of Evelyn Amarteifio <sup>[45]</sup>. Being in attendance in Ghana for this women's movement suggests her interest in helping Ghanaian and African women to achieve equal standards with male in Africa. When Graham Du Bois came to Ghana, she sought to promote gender equality by using the Ghana television and radio. Empowerment programs were streamed on the television and the television had special section for women. The activities of the Federation in the 1960 that was revealed by Evelyn Amarteifio included the house-to-house educational campaign on the government's census in areas in the Central Region. Again, at the conference the major focus of the federation was the promotion of leadership and citizenship among women of Africa, finding solution to women common problems, and promoting friendship among women. Another women's group named, Ghana Women's League, which was led by

Mrs. Hannah Kudjoe focused on solving problems that faced women in the Northern part of Ghana such as Infant mortality, female nudity and unbalanced food. She helped solve this problem by moving to the area, educating women and their husbands of the need to protect themselves by wearing dresses, and eating good and healthy food to allow them to survive and reduce the death rate among children. These were the focus of Ghana's first women's movement organizations. These problems that needed to be solved were what influenced Shirley Graham Du Bois who was the Director of television to institute some programs that were for only women. Programs that Graham DU Bois instituted included, woman's own, Ga women's magazine, Hausa and Dagbani Women's magazine, Ewe Women's Magazine, Akan Women's Magazine, and Housewives favorites <sup>[46]</sup>. As the names of these programs suggest, the focus was geared towards women, there existed no program on either the radio or the television that was male centered, suggesting the importance of women issues to Graham Du Bois.

The programs on women sometimes discussed marriage and encouraged women and girls to marry men they love and not that which was given to them by their parents, mostly dictated by the father. This was a way of informing women to fight off patriarchy before marriage. Under marriage there was also discussion on the traditional and the Christian wedding where women were advised to go in for the traditional marriage since it gave them the power to divorce their husbands when things were not going well. On issue of food, the television and radio programs advised women to promote African dishes just as European women promoted their food. One program preached that:

If you visited a European, she would not dream of giving you an African dish, so if you have Europeans among your guests, do not try to impress them by cooking oriental dishes that might be very expensive and perhaps poor imitations <sup>[47]</sup>.

This submission was to bring women into the group that fought against imperialism and make them active participants in helping Ghana and Africa achieve it self-reliant goal. The television and radio programs also discussed child welfare, and development issues. Parents were admonished to make sure that they provided their children with resources that would help them succeed in life <sup>[48]</sup>. There were discussions of diets and its importance to the wellbeing of children, the discourse revealed that It is not enough just not to feel hungry- today we are concerned that every child should have a feeling of optimum well-being. It is the person of strength and vigour who has the endowment for an interesting productive life. As highlighted earlier nutrition and child mortality was a problem facing women and their organization sought to help solve that, Graham Du Bois found ways to insert important programs such as these to accelerate the solution. The special television and radio programs that were sent to the rural areas to teach farmers and fishermen how to increase their production went a long way to help women to remain self-reliant and made them important contributors to the family economy. Ghanaian rural women had served as farmers, growing crops on both large and small scale, and therefore benefitted from the teachings that they received from people from the television and radio stations on how to improve their crops and

<sup>39</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, Inauguration of Ghana Television.

<sup>40</sup> S. Abbey-Mensah, Rural Broadcasting in Ghana. July 31, 1965.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Mother and Mistress.

<sup>43</sup> Jennifer Blaylock, *Feminist Media Histories*(2022) 8(1):102-133

<sup>44</sup> Mother and Mistress, 109.

<sup>45</sup> The Women's Mass Movement, 92.

<sup>46</sup> Ghanaian Times, This is Radio Ghana, May 18, 1964.

<sup>47</sup> Women's Engagement with Radio Broadcasting, 199.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

produce. Historians who perceive the activism of Shirley Graham Du Bois in Ghana as not fully promoting women issues and so disregard her as a women activist mainly focus on what a gender activist means today (The issue of presentism). They also tend to disregard the activities of the women organization of the time therefore belittling her effort as someone who promoted women status. By placing her actions and activities in the context of the time and what was perceived as activism of the time, it becomes clear that she promoted women status through her position, and prepared Ghanaian women for what laid ahead of them.

### Conclusion

Shirley Graham Du Bois is an expansive personality that calls for extensive studies in order to appreciate her contribution to the different areas she worked. It was clear in the historiographical section how she played multifaceted roles, serving as a civil right activist, a professional woman as an artist, her international nature and her travels to Europe, Asia, Africa, and her political alignment with socialism and communism. In this paper, a discussion was made on her political and professional roles in Ghana. It was evident in this paper that Shirley Graham Du Bois had begun playing important political roles in Ghana in the early 1960s when she delivered a speech on behalf of her husband at the All-African People's conference. She also played an important political role by travelling with Dr. Kwame Nkrumah to the All-African Heads summit in 1963. Shirley Graham after the death of her husband became very close with Nkrumah, and advised him in almost all aspect of his administration. Graham Du Bois position as the Director of Television was an important political and professional position since the television was to push Nkrumah's ideals of socialism. Graham Du Bois relationship with heads of government around the world helped bring Nkrumah closer to some socialist and communist countries. Her important roles in Ghana's politics during the presidency of Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah cannot be overemphasized.

Shirley Graham Du Bois also used her position as the Director of the Ghana Television to push Nkrumah's socialist agenda and helped bring the people of Ghana closer to the government. The programs streamed both on the television and on the radios promoted nationalism and pushed the country towards development. The people were made aware of what was ongoing in the government through programs such as 'parliament today', and 'today's news'. Children programs were geared toward inculcating in them nationalism and pushing the country's development through technological and vocational programs.

Contrary to earlier argument that Shirley Graham was not a woman activist, this paper argues that through her personality, her participation in women's movement meetings, and the various women focused programs she instituted through the television, she was able to promote women issues. She discussed women problems such as marriage, children development, and nutrition, problems that were the focus of women's movement in Ghana at the time. The programs she instituted to help rural inhabitants also helped promote women status, women farmers got more out of their cultivation. Inserting the activities of Shirley Graham Du Bois in the period she lived in Ghana, allows one to appreciate the modest activities she undertook to promote women's status during her short stay in Ghana.

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