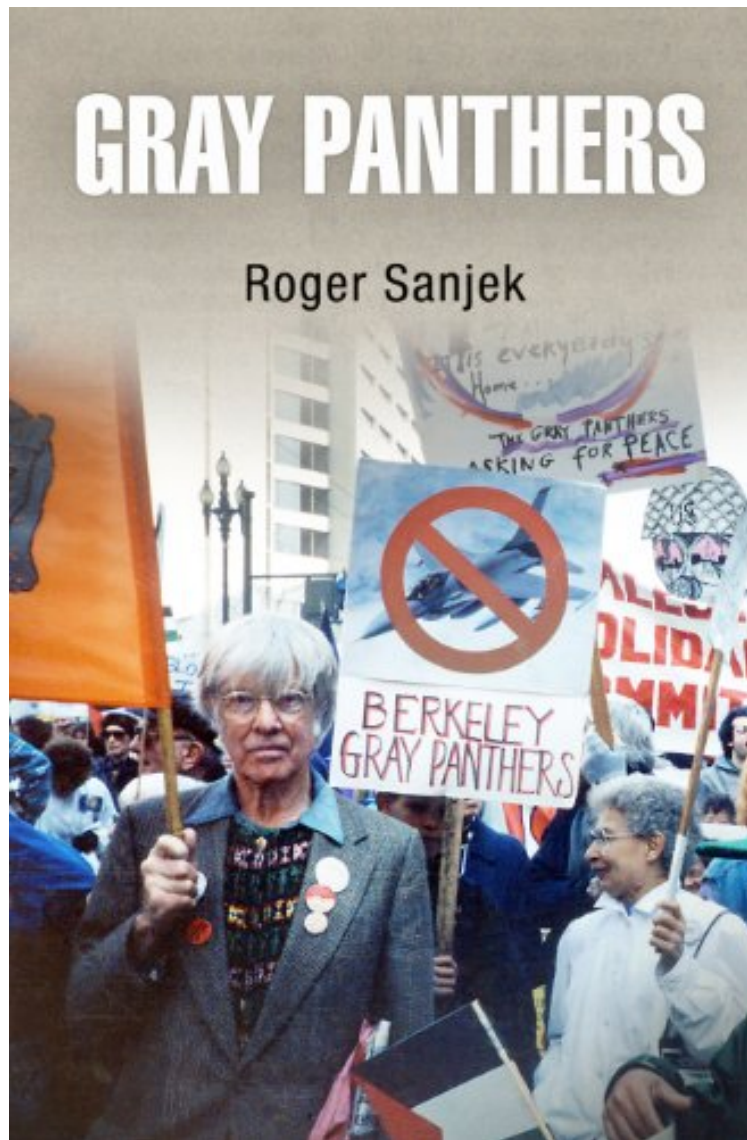


[Download ebook] Gray Panthers

## Gray Panthers

Roger Sanjek

audiobook / \*ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#4313973 in Books 2011-07-29 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.90 x .90 x 6.001, 1.15 #File Name: 0812221915320 pages | File size: 24.Mb

**Roger Sanjek : Gray Panthers** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gray Panthers:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. None By SusanSES. Houston, Texas The author had definitely done his research diligently, to the point it was a bit over-detailed. A good source for a term paper. I found it a little "dry" for pleasure reading but I did get very interested in the community clinics.

In 1970, a sixty-five-year-old Philadelphian named Maggie Kuhn began vocally opposing the notion of mandatory retirement. Taking inspiration from the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements, Kuhn and her cohorts created an activist organization that quickly gained momentum as the Gray Panthers. After receiving national publicity for her efforts she even appeared on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson she gained thousands of supporters, young and old. Their cause expanded to include universal health care, nursing home reform, affordable and accessible housing, defense of Social Security, and elimination of nuclear weapons. Gray Panthers traces the roots of Maggie Kuhn's social justice agenda to her years as a YWCA and Presbyterian Church staff member. It tells the nearly forty-year story of the intergenerational grassroots movement that Kuhn founded and its scores of local groups. During the 1980s, more than one hundred chapters were tackling local and national issues. By the 1990s the ranks of older members were thinning and most young members had departed, many to pursue careers in public service. But despite its challenges, including Kuhn's death in 1995, the movement continues today. Roger Sanjek examines Gray Panther activism over four decades. Here the inner workings and dynamics of the movement emerge: the development of network leadership, local projects and tactics, conflict with the national office, and the intergenerational political ties that made the group unique among contemporary activist groups. Part ethnography, part history, part memoir, Gray Panthers draws on archives and interviews as well as the author's thirty years of personal involvement. With the impending retirement of the baby boomers, Sanjek's book will surely inform the debates and discussions to follow: on retirement, health care, and many other aspects of aging in a society that has long valued youth above all.

"A fascinating study of the radical grassroots organization that had, as its founder stated, 'success out of proportion to our numbers.'"Peace Studies"Gray Panthers offers a sweeping yet intimate view of one of the most important yet misunderstood social movements in the United States after the Second World War. As someone who, like the author, worked closely with and was shaped by these 'wrinkled radicals,' it is clear to me that we owe the Gray Panthers a huge debt of gratitude for shaking up the way we view aging and older people in America. Sanjek has made a lasting contribution to the annals of aging and social history by capturing this fascinating story in all of its colorful and at times zany detail."Stephen McConnell, *The Atlantic Philanthropies*"This book is an original and unique contribution to the literature on the Gray Panthers and will be a definitive resource for anyone interested in its organization, its leadership, or its impact on legislative policy."Maria D. Vesperi, *New College of Florida*"Gray Panthers makes a substantial contribution to the literature of aging, social movements, and U.S. history."Rene Rose Shield, Director, Resource Center for Geriatrics Education, *Brown University*"An important contribution. . . Roger Sanjek examines Gray Panther activism for over four decades their leadership, purpose, organizing, and networking."American Anthropologist"Roger Sanjek's book is a personal and heartfelt memoir of the activities and philosophy of the Gray Panthers, a political, economic, and social justice advocacy group that has often focused on elderly issues from its formation to the present."American Historical Association"About the Author Roger Sanjek is Professor of Anthropology at Queens College, City University of New York. He is a J. I. Staley Prize winner, a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow, and the author of *The Future of Us All: Race and Neighborhood Politics in New York City*. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Preface I will never forget my first Gray Panther meeting. It was held at the West Berkeley Library on a February afternoon in 1977. I was struck immediately by the voluble energy of some two dozen gray-haired women and men talking about political issues and the activities of their "network." I quickly realized, first, that I had never been in a room with so many older people before, and, second, that whatever stereotypes of "senior citizens" I held had just flown out the window. I was 32, and for Lani Sanjek and me the Gray Panthers transformed our notions of what our 60s, 70s, 80s, or 90s could be. In the 1970s the elderly were still widely seen as "impotent, frail, disabled, demented, or dependent." They were expected to "disengage" (which was also a prominent gerontological theory), not enter the public sphere. And because, like most people, they "conform[ed] to the institutional arrangements which enmesh them, . . . and which appear to be the only possible reality," most older persons remained "quiescent." Throughout America's history, however, there have been "challenges" by political movements to "the rules laid down by . . . traditional authority," with public notoriety following when activists appear "out of place" from where cultural assumptions relegate them. Women voicing political views in the eighteenth and nineteenth century were "out of place." So were factory workers sitting-down on plant floors in the 1930s. And African Americans sitting-in at "white" eateries between 1957 and 1960. And middle-aged female "displaced homemakers" picketing for job openings in 1974. And people in wheelchairs occupying federal offices to protest lagging civil rights enforcement in 1977. The Gray Panthers similarly shattered dominant cultural expectations by appearing in locations and undertaking actions that were "out of place." Lani and I had gone to Berkeley five months earlier for my one-year postdoctoral fellowship in quantitative anthropology and public policy at the University of California mainly to escape threatened layoffs at Queens College in New York following that city's 1975 fiscal crisis. She had just completed the nurse practitioner program at Lehman College, like Queens part of the City University of New York, and soon began volunteering at Berkeley's Over 60 Clinic founded by the Gray Panthers. In December she became the clinic's director. Though we intended to stay in Berkeley for only nine months, Lani served as director for two years, while I became an Over 60 volunteer applied anthropologist and then an active member of the Berkeley

Gray Panthers. During our second year I was awarded a fellowship in the University of California, San Francisco, medical anthropology program headed by Margaret Clark, a pioneer in the anthropology of aging. Health care visionary and activist Lillian Rabinowitz, convener of the Berkeley network, was our Gray Panther mentor. In Berkeley we also met Gray Panther movement founder and leader Maggie Kuhn (pronounced "koon"), whom we had seen on the Johnny Carson television show a few times, and who in 1981 was our houseguest on a visit to New York. In 1978 I returned to New York and Queens College, where I still teach. In 1980 I joined the New York Gray Panthers in Manhattan, and also established ties with the Gray Panthers of Queens, who met near the College. In 1981 I was elected to the Gray Panther National Steering Committee. The following year I organized a meeting of leaders of the seven Gray Panther networks in New York. This resulted in forming an umbrella group, the Gray Panthers of New York City, which I chaired from 1982 to 1987. Lani continued to work as a nurse in community-based settings, and also joined the New York Gray Panther health committee. Meanwhile, I began a team fieldwork project on relations between established white and black Americans and new Asian and Latin American immigrants in Queens, and this led to my appointment as founding director of the Asian/American Center at Queens College in 1987. The time demands of this position made it impossible to continue as convener of the citywide Panther group. While remaining dues-paying members of the Manhattan network, by 1988 Lani and I were no longer "active" Gray Panthers. That year she joined the staff of New York StateWide Senior Action Council, a membership organization of older activists, where she worked as a health care advocate and organizer until retiring in 2006. During the 1980s and 1990s Lani and I kept in touch with Lillian Rabinowitz during her visits to her sister Pearl in Queens. Over shared meals Lillian gave vivid updates on activities in Berkeley, where the Gray Panthers continued to flourish. In 1992 Lani and I attended the twentieth anniversary celebration of the New York Gray Panthers. Mirroring the bigger picture nationally, their membership was shrinking and other New York City networks were consolidating. In 1995 the movement's founder Maggie Kuhn died at age 89. The following year I spoke about my Queens research at a New York Gray Panther meeting, and in 1998 Lani, who that year co-founded the New York Network for Action on Medicare (NYNAM), briefed members on threats to Medicare. By then only one Gray Panther network still existed in New York, and in 2000 it ended regular meetings. I began this book in 1981-82 when I wrote first drafts of Chapters 2 and 3 covering the origins and first five years of the Gray Panther movement. I utilized eighteen boxes of organizational documents at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, which Maggie Kuhn and the Panthers' executive director Edith Giese arranged for me to visit; and I reviewed national office files with the cooperation of Gray Panther staff members Sherry Clearwater and Rosalie Riechman. I also interviewed Maggie about her pre-Panther life and the movement's beginnings. In 1982 I returned to Berkeley to interview Lillian Rabinowitz and work through that network's files. In 1983 I resigned from the National Steering Committee after struggles between "National" and network-based factions (described in Chapter 6). Dispirited, I did not return to work on the manuscript until 1985 when I completed a draft of Chapter 4 on the Over 60 Clinic and Berkeley network. I planned to finish the book in 1986, but that year my father died and I made no further progress. My three Gray Panther chapters remained on a back burner while I continued my Queens fieldwork project and completed a book about it. In 1999 I read Maggie's autobiography, *No Stone Unturned: The Life and Times of Maggie Kuhn*, published in 1991. Aside from personal details it contained relatively little about her career not found in previous writings and interviews, and surprisingly little about the Gray Panthers. In 1999 Lani and I also attended the twelfth biannual Gray Panther convention in Washington D.C. In 2002 I returned to my Gray Panther manuscript. A 2003-04 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship and a 2006 Queens College sabbatical leave allowed me to revise Chapters 2, 3, and 4, add coverage of the Panther movement in New York City, and bring the national, Berkeley, and New York pictures up to date. As it turned out, the New York network resumed meeting in 2003, and while completing this book I became an "active" Gray Panther again. In 2004 we attended the thirteenth Gray Panther national convention in Seattle, and in 2007 I was a guest at the spring and fall national Board meetings. Lani and I also revisited Berkeley in 2007 and attended a meeting of the network where our involvement with the Gray Panther movement began three decades earlier. I completed this book as I turned 63, and many Gray Panther concerns look different to me now than when my consciousness about aging and ageism was raised in my early 30s. Sharing in hospice care for my father Russell, who died from prostate cancer at age 70 (which is young to me now), and helping my mother Betty, 90, following her stroke and rehabilitation therapy in 2003 and subsequent falls and hospitalizations, plus frequent visits at her assisted living residence, color my understanding of health and long-term care issues. So have the lives of Lani's parents James, who died at 93 in 2006, and June Morioka, 92, both hearing aid users who aged in place at home with family members close at hand. Lani and I also remained close to a few activist friends as they entered their 90s, continuing to be inspired by their engagement with current politics and with life. As a childless couple beginning our own retirement years, we remain concerned about war and intervention abroad, and threats to Medicare and Social Security at home. It is the struggles waged by our 1960s political generation, plus the baby boomers who follow, that will help determine our future in a world we share with people on all continents, and in a United States where by 2030 one in five persons will be 65 and over. Plan of the Book In telling the stories of the national Gray Panther movement and its Berkeley and Newlocal groups this book combines chronological and topical viewpoints. Chapter 1 briefly surveys the rise of old age poverty and retirement in

the twentieth century United States, and the subsequent political responses by older people. It also presents biographies of six older Gray Panthers focused on their political activism from the 1930s onward, and for two younger members from the 1960s, before they joined the movement in the 1970s. Chapter 2 examines the pre-Gray Panther life of founder Maggie Kuhn, and then her creation of the movement in 1970 and its activities until 1972. Chapter 3 continues the national Gray Panther story through the group's first convention in 1975. It also introduces the theme of tension between national and local levels of the movement, which recurs in later chapters. Chapters 4 and 5 shift to the local "networks" in Berkeley and New York City and their activities through 1985. Though the New York Gray Panthers began first in 1972, I begin with Berkeley, where I first encountered the movement, and its origin in 1973. These chapters show what local Panther groups did in such areas as health care, nursing homes, housing, transportation, nuclear disarmament, and Social Security. They also deal with nuts-and-bolts aspects of how a social movement operates: committees and "task forces", planning and conducting actions, links with other chapters, coalitions, interpersonal relationships, fundraising. Chapter 6 covers the national organization from 1975 to 1985, including Gray Panther responses to the presidencies of Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan. During this decade the Panthers formed an alliance with the National Senior Citizens Law Center, helped create the National Citizens Coalition for Nursing Home Reform, and achieved representation at the United Nations. As the networks rapidly grew to more than one hundred, initiated regional meetings, and formed umbrella organizations in California and New York, national-local conflict intensified during 1982-85. Biannual conventions occurred, and publicity expanded as Maggie became a national celebrity. In 1985 the Panthers opened a Washington D.C. office. Chapter 7 covers the period from 1986 to Maggie's death in 1995. As the founder grew increasingly frail and the movement faced closure in the early 1990s, new national leadership appeared. However, a loss of younger members to career demands, and older members to disability and death, diminished the number of networks as well as their activist ranks. Chapter 8 deals with the years after Maggie, 1996-2007, and efforts at the national level to mount national campaigns and to nourish the grassroots. Chapters 7 and 8 also trace events in Berkeley and New York from 1986 to 2007 when, despite setbacks, both networks continued to survive. Four of the chapters use opening "time jump" vignettes, beginning with a key event in Gray Panther history that occurs at the end of the time period the chapter covers: Maggie's 1972 Denver press conference that resulted in the movement's first national publicity (Chapter 2); the first Gray Panther national convention in 1975 (Chapter 3); the opening of the Panthers' D.C. office in 1985 (Chapter 6); and Maggie's death in 1995 (Chapter 7). The concluding Chapter 9 surveys "the Gray Panther legacy." Here the movement's key contours over nearly four decades are sketched, and the principle accomplishments identified. Gray Panther ideology and tactics are delineated, and the later careers of several "alumni," mainly younger members, briefly described. The book ends with discussion of how the Panthers' social justice agenda fares in the new century, and how they may fare in the future. Readers wanting an analytic overview of the Gray Panthers might read this chapter first. The book is written with a broad readership in mind, including Gray Panther members and alumni, other activists, students and scholars (in anthropology, American history, social movements, gerontology, health and social welfare policy, peace studies), and older people as well as baby boomers contemplating their older years. Accordingly, references to sources and to academic discussions and theoretical concepts are restricted to endnotes. Sources and Acknowledgments This book is the work of a social anthropologist, yet it is not, strictly speaking, the product of ethnographic fieldwork like my writings about Brazil, Ghana, and Queens. In Berkeley I had no intention of writing anything about the Gray Panthers until shortly before returning to New York when I addressed an anthropological audience about my experiences at the Over 60 Clinic. And when beginning work on this book, I did not foresee including a chapter on the New York Gray Panthers, and, as in Berkeley, recorded no fieldnotes. Consequently, the sections based on my participation in these two networks in the 1970s and 1980s are derived from newsletters, meeting agendas, letters, and other documents I kept in my files, sometimes with contemporaneous handwritten notations. These, of course, have been filtered and amplified by my "headnote" memories of events I witnessed as a participant. The chapter covering the national Gray Panthers in the early 1980s similarly draws upon documents and headnotes from my attendance at the 1981 national Gray Panther convention, National Steering Committee meetings in 1982-83, and interactions with national office staff and Maggie Kuhn during those years, plus "scratch notes" recorded at the opening of the Gray Panther Washington office in 1985. Later chapters incorporate fieldnotes as well as printed materials from the 1999 and 2004 national conventions and a national Board meeting in 2007; notes on conversations with Tim Fuller and Charlotte Flynn in 2003, Susan Murany and Tim Allison in 2004, and Murany and Board members in 2007; and documents and fieldnotes from New York since 2004, and from our Berkeley visit in 2007. Earlier and intervening Gray Panther events I did not observe were reconstructed from document files I consulted in Philadelphia, Berkeley, and New York in the 1980s and after 2003, and additional information from my interviews with Maggie Kuhn and Lillian Rabinowitz. I also draw on documents from the New York Gray Panthers' early years conveyed to me by Hope Bagger in the 1980s and Lydia Bragger in 1992, and materials Charlotte Flynn sent me in 2003. My "upstream" (and downstream) understanding of these Gray Panther sources inescapably was influenced by my assessments of people I knew and my interpretation of events I participated in during 1976-78, 1980-87, 1992, 1999, and 2004-07. In reading these local and national documents, my "positionality" as a Gray Panther member thus animates and affects what I

take from them. While I have attempted to employ an ethnographic sensibility and adhere to canons of validity I advocate, this book admittedly is the story as one Gray Panther lived and sees it part ethnography, part history, part memoir. This book has benefited from the reactions of several readers. I am fortunate that Shubert Frye and Cameron Hall read and commented on drafts of Chapters 2 and 3 in 1984. I also am grateful for responses to these chapters then from Steve McConnell, Sudie George, and Kit Scripps. Chapter 4 incorporates comments on a 1985 draft from Berkeley Gray Panthers Lillian Rabinowitz, Anne Squires, Tim Orr, Charlotte Knight, and Gerda Miller, and by Michael Cousineau and Marty Lynch. (I sent these three chapters to Maggie but she never responded.) More recently, I am grateful to Randy Block, Glen Gersmehl, Maxine Lyons, Steve McConnell (again), Paula Mixson, Susan Murany, Margot Smith, Gene TeSelle, and Carla Woodworth for comments on various chapters, and to Judy Lear for reading the entire manuscript. University of Pennsylvania Press readers Renee Rose Shield and Maria Vesperi offered numerous suggestions that improved the book. Lani Sanjek read early and last drafts. More important, we have shared this life adventure