



# The Breaking of the American Social Compact

*Frances Fox Piven, Richard A. Cloward*

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*The Breaking of the American Social Compact* is a landmark volume from two of our most perceptive social critics. Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward address the tumultuous politics of the past three decades that have culminated in an all-out assault on the American social compact. Delving into the political dynamics behind the rise of the working class in the 1930s and 1960s, Piven and Cloward assign singular importance to disruptive protest and examine the ways protest has dwindled since the 1960s and how many reforms gained then have been swept away. They cover the dramatic changes of recent years, from the breakup of the traditional Democratic Party, to the new power struggles between blacks and whites in northern cities, to the increasing demonization of immigrants and the poor everywhere. Finally, they examine the politics underlying governmental "reform," arguing that the recent devolution of federal authority is simply a strategy to increase the influence of business.

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