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Examining the reform process of the old age pension system in Russia, from its Soviet origins to the Putin era, *Shocking Mother Russia* adds significantly to the growing body of literature on comparative social policy and the political challenges of pension reform. Andrea Chandler explains why Russia's old-age pension system went into decline after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, even though it was a prominent issue in the political arena at the outset of the post-communist transition. While tracing the roots of the system's difficulties to the Soviet Union's first efforts to establish a national social welfare system after 1917, Chandler nonetheless devotes the bulk of her study to the period from 1990 to 2001. While political factors impeded reform for much of this eleven-year period, ultimately Russia's striking policy reversals provide a case study for developing nations. In 1990, a new Russian pension law was adopted during the Soviet reform process of perestroika. The system was again significantly altered in 2001 when a market-reform-oriented package of pension legislation was passed. *Shocking Mother Russia* places the Russian experience in comparative perspective, and suggests lessons for pension reform derived from analysis of the Russian case.
