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Autore	McIntyre W. David (William David), <1932-2022.>
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Sommario/riassunto	The author, a professor of history at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, presents a comprehensive survey of Commonwealth history from the time of soul-searching about the future of the British Empire, which marked the middle years of Queen Victoria's reign, to the year when Britain decided to enter the European Community. The account is divided in three periods - 1869 to 1917, 1917 to 1941, and 1942 to 1971. Within each period a four-fold thematic divisions is followed: Dominions, Indian Empire, crown colonies, and protectorates.