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Sommario/riassunto	Tracing the development of western thought about Central Asia, this book argues that for historical and political reasons, Central Asia was seen as being in a colonial relationship with Russia. Consequently, an anti-colonial revolution in Asia was seen as the greatest threat to the USSR. The book questions the suitability of the colonial model for understanding the region's recent political history and challenges many of the assumptions which underlay the adoption of such a model, and examines how this one interpretation came to dominate western discourse to the virtual exclusion of all others.