



# Beyond the Malachite Hills

Jonathan Lawley

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## **Beyond the Malachite Hills** Jonathan Lawley

What hope is there for Africa? Since the heady and hopeful days of decolonisation the story seems to be one of unrelenting disaster - revolution; brutal military dictatorship; ethnic conflict - even genocide; civil war; state-threatening corruption; economic failure; and, in places, the complete breakdown of state and society. And all has been compounded by natural disasters - drought, famine and the scourge of AIDS. But there is another, less reported, story of Africa: throwing off the colonial past, embracing modernity, learning fast, gaining in pride and self-confidence and embracing the crucial management function; all this in the context of fruitful collaboration with Europe and American business and, increasingly, with the rising Asian economic superpowers. Jonathan Lawley's *Beyond the Malachite Hills* paints a vivid and convincing picture of solid political, social and economic progress. He is in a unique position to tell this story. After a 'colonial' childhood in India under the Raj and in white-dominated Southern Rhodesia, followed by school and university in apartheid South Africa, he rejected racialism and white minority rule. He joined the British Colonial Service and served as a District Officer in Northern Rhodesia in the years running up to decolonisation, and stayed on in Zambia after independence. Jonathan Lawley's business career reflected and contributed to African economic advancement, firmly rooted in a rejection of racialism even in its heartland of big, European-dominated, business. He applied his business ideals in pursuing indigenous technical and business training in copper mining in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), followed by assignments in Morocco and Mauritius. A brief interlude and a return to African politics came when he helped to supervise the elections following the Lancaster House Agreement which brought Robert Mugabe to power in Zimbabwe. But his most lasting contribution to Africa came with the mining giant Rio Tinto, and his ground-breaking scheme for training indigenous technical managers. These rose to the highest positions and broke the mould of European managerial and technical dominance. His promotion of African business continued in his role as Africa Director of the British Executive Service Overseas (BESO) and as Director of the Royal African Society and consultant to the West African Business Association (WABA) and the Southern African Business Forum (SABF). *Beyond the Malachite Hills* is a remarkable testament to his long-lasting and profound involvement with this often misunderstood continent.



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