

The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence in many African states brought about a renewed interest in the ways in which the event has been celebrated, commemorated, performed and contested in the last decades. Building upon this trend, the workshop intends to recapture the intensity and significance of Africa's Independence as a way to further scrutinize the visions of Africa's future developed since the 1950s.

We focus on intellectual and material motives, resources, and strategies that inspired actors to conceive and promote ideas of a post-colonial future. Since the eve of Independence, many African states have elaborated nation-building policies that joined the chorus of other emergent and consolidated nation-states. National celebrations, educational policies, the promotion of party and mass organizations, and the grip on the media were all crucial for the ruling elites to establish legitimacy. However, visions of the future inspired by Africa's Independence went beyond hegemonic narratives of the nation-state's ruling elites. Dissenting and alternative voices in tension and conflict with these narratives were rife. Moreover, orthodox and unorthodox views of the post-colonial future were not confined to the new national borders but often engaged with broader visions of Africa in international contexts.

We take the highly emotional and symbolic moments of Independence – its aspirations, commemorations, preparations – to investigate not only the uneven courses of nation-building but also the multiple ways in which this era of great expectations came along with constraints, difficulties, and disillusion.

The Workshop is convened by Sub-project 1 "Narratives of the Future in the History of Modern Africa" (Project "Future Africa: Visions in Time") at the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies, in cooperation with the Doctoral Research Group "The Poetics and Politics of National Commemoration in Africa" at the Department of Anthropology and African Studies, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, and with Sub-project 5 "Revolution 3.0. Iconographies of Social Utopia in Africa and its Diasporas", at the Bayreuth Academy.

For further inquiries: [MaxKrogoll@gmail.com](mailto:MaxKrogoll@gmail.com)

#### Useful information

##### Workshop venue:

*Iwalewahaus*  
Wölfelstraße 2, 95444 Bayreuth  
Tel. 0921/55-4500

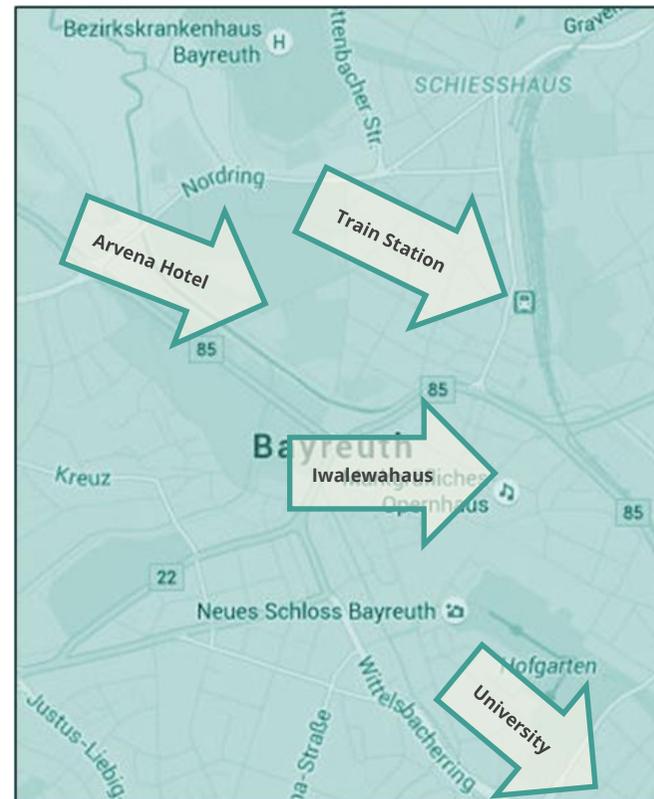
##### Getting there:

The workshop venue is within a 5 minute walking distance from the main train station.

##### Accommodation:

*Arvena Kongress Hotel*  
Eduard-Bayerlein-Straße 5a, 95445 Bayreuth  
Tel. 0921/7270

The hotel is within a 15 minute walking distance from the workshop venue/main train station.



# Celebrating w h o s e Independence?

Visions of the  
Post-Colonial  
Nation in Africa

Workshop in Bayreuth  
15-16 January 2016

## Program

### Friday, 15 January

15.00 **Opening and Welcome**

15.15 **Opening Keynote Lecture:** Frederick Cooper (New York University):  
Forgotten Futures: Federation, Confederation, and Community in French Africa at the Moment of Decolonization

16.30 *Coffee/Tea Break*

17.00 **Panel 1: Celebrating Independence and Building the Nation**

The first panel focuses on national celebrations that took place on the occasion of independence and the national days instituted and celebrated thereafter. It is concerned with official representations and the performative staging of the nation as well as the national symbols that served the nation-building process.

**Keynote Lecture:** Carola Lentz (Universitaet Mainz): Independence Days: the politics and aesthetics of national commemoration in Africa

**Contributors:**

Marie-Christine Gabriel (Universitaet Mainz): Building the state, imagining the nation, envisioning the future: national-day celebrations in Burkina Faso

*Coffee/Tea Break*

Harcourt Fuller (Georgia State University): 'Work and Happiness': Utopian Visions of a Modern Future in the Nationalist Symbols of Nkrumah's Ghana

Konstanze N'guessan (Universitaet Mainz): Staging the nation: national day festivities in Côte d'Ivoire as scattered serial performances

**Discussant:** Odile Goerg (Université Paris Diderot)

20.00 *Dinner at Engin's Ponte*

### Saturday, 16 January

09.00 **Panel 2: Representing Independence**

The panel analyses images, popular reactions and emotions with regard to Independence and their representations in literature and personal memoirs. The panel also addresses the issue, raised by disillusioned writers, of the "confiscation" of national Independence by the ruling elites.

**Contributors:**

Katharina Fink (Universitaet Bayreuth): Radiant Independence - Mobilizing images of beauty in the context of Independence

Nadine Siegert (Universitaet Bayreuth): The Iconography of Militant Femininity in the context of African Independences

10.00 *Coffee/Tea break*

10.30 **Panel 2 continued**

Godwin Kornes (Universitaet Mainz): Performing the 'dramatic narrative': the commemorative calendar of national holidays in Namibia

Ute Fendler (Universitaet Bayreuth): Looking back forward: independence in Mozambican films of the 1980s (O tempo dos leopardos (1985) and O vento sopra de norte (1986))

**Discussant** for Panel 2: Drew Thompson (Bard College)

12.15 **Lunch**

14.00 **Panel 3: Dissenting Views of the Nation**

This panel focuses on alternative voices that dissented from the master narrative of the ruling elites in different post-colonial states. It explores how several groups contested the legitimacy of the elites and imagined different paths to Africa's future.

**Contributors:**

Annalisa Urbano (Universitaet Bayreuth): Ideas of future Somalia at the time of Independence

Melanie Torrent (Université Paris Diderot): International politics, diplomatic networks and the failure of alternative 'Reunifications' in Cameroon

João Paulo Borges Coelho (Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo): Mozambique: Independence and its margins

**Discussant:** Achim von Oppen (Universitaet Bayreuth)

16.00 *Tea/Coffee Break*

16.30 **Panel 4: Staging Independence Internationally**

The panel examines how Independent Africa was staged and debated at international festivals. We deal with images, politics, debates and the stakes of such international festivals against the background of national, African or foreign, political and cultural aspirations.

**Contributors:**

Constantin Katsakioris (Universitaet Bayreuth): The Cold War of Festivals: Africans in the Soviet Union, Soviets in Dakar

Éloi Ficquet (EHESS Paris): Pan-African Thought, Black Aesthetics, Real Politik and the Developmental State: The Roots of Senghor's Cultural Diplomacy and its Aftermath

Malika Rahal (Université Paris Diderot): Des Africains à Alger. Le Panaf de 1969: tiers-mondisme, révolution et panafricanisme

**Discussant:** [To be announced]

18.30 **Concluding Discussion**

Chair: Susanne Lachenicht (Universitaet Bayreuth)

20.00 *Dinner at Schinner Braustuben*