

## THE FORGOTTEN GENERATION: THE FIRST GENERATION OF SPANISH IMMIGRANTS IN HAMBURG

Film screening and discussion, August 25, 2006. Co-sponsored by the GHI, the Spanish Embassy, and the Goethe Institute. Film director Ainhoa Montoya Arteabaro was present at the event.

The city of Hamburg has attracted quite a bit of scholarly attention in the past few years, especially from scholars from abroad. Ainhoa Montoya Arteabaro's documentary deals with the history of one part of its immigrant community: the Spanish. It provides a glimpse into the lives of those people who made up the first wave of guest workers, *Gastarbeiter*, to Germany in the late 1950s and early 1960s, a time when the German economy was booming and labor was short. Those who arrived from Spain came mainly from poor rural regions like Andalusia, Galicia, or Castile. Some came as tourists and decided to stay; others were recruited by German employers and had labor contracts even before they arrived in places like Hamburg. Many were unskilled laborers. The industrial regions of the German states of North-Rhine Westphalia and Baden-Württemberg attracted the largest numbers of Spanish workers. Hamburg drew its share of several thousand men and women who found employment in different industries like machine construction or textile production. By 1967 the Spanish community in Germany had grown to about 10 percent of its immigrant population, third in size behind the Italians and the Greeks. The Germans generally felt that they could get along with the Spanish. They seemed to blend in very well as workers and neighbors even though they formed rather tight-knit communities in many places. Paella, tapas, and sangria soon became part of the German vocabulary.

Filmmaker Arteabaro shows five stories of this generation. Today nearly all of the men and women she interviewed are retirees living in Hamburg. They talk about the experience of going abroad and about the difficulties they have had living in a strange country. Yet after forty years, Spain no longer feels like home to them either.

Born in Bilbao, Spain in 1973, Arteabaro studied media culture and advertising at the University of Madrid. In 1998 she moved to Germany, where she works as a projectionist in the oldest cinema of Hamburg. This is her first feature-length film, produced in 2006 as part of a program with the Hochschule für bildende Künste in Hamburg (HfbK).

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