

Rage, questions sparked film

By JOHN DODD
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As she grew up in Canada, Irene Lilienheim Angelico began to discover that she was different from other children.

She had no grandparents. Her parents' house contained no trinkets from the past, no heirlooms, no family picture albums. Her parents, she discovered, could discuss their past only with the greatest difficulty.

They were survivors of the Holocaust. As Jews in Poland, both of them had been separated and interned in German concentration camps. They were the only members of their family to survive. They were re-united after the war and Angelico was born in 1949. The family emigrated to America and the parents tried to shield their daughter from the pain of the past.

But the Holocaust was too enormous to be shielded from. Angelico became obsessed with it. She was left with rage and unanswered questions. She, like the other children of survivors now in their 20s and 30s, was preoccupied with a history in which she played no part. If Nazis individually were not monsters, how could the Holocaust have happened? How could she deal with her parents' pain? How could she relate to the Holocaust and the German people?

"All those feelings had to come out so they could be dealt with," Angelico said in an interview at the National Film Board distribution office. "As a film-maker, this was my way of exploring it."

Five years of planning, fund-raising,

filming and editing resulted in a haunting documentary called *Dark Lullabies*, a feature-length examination of the impact of the Holocaust on the Jews — and the Germans — born after the war. The NFB production will be shown Tuesday at 8 p.m. in the Centennial Library. Admission is free and Angelico will participate in a discussion following the screening.

Angelico met with other daughters and sons of survivors in Canada and Israel and then travelled to Germany to talk with the children of Nazis. Finally, she visited the concentration camp at Dachau. A film crew accompanied her on this personal odyssey — and the results are amazing.

Because Angelico herself is on camera and reacts emotionally to what people say, her subjects open up. There are tears and passionate feelings that you don't ordinarily find in a documentary.

"We got down to real gut feelings."

At first, it was difficult for Angelico to meet with the children of Nazis, the beloved offspring of those who had made her parents suffer and murdered all her other relatives. She found something in common with them, however. Like the children of survivors, the children of Nazis are also struggling to deal with their feelings about the war.

For both groups, feelings are repressed and unbelievably painful. And while exploration of the past brings the Jews closer to their parents, it is just the opposite for the children of Nazis.



Irene Lilienheim Angelico

... after making film she was left with sign of hope

Today, says Angelico, the outrage is still there for her. "But now it is in the open and I can deal with it and it helps me deal with what's happening around me in the world today, in Cambodia, Central America and South Africa. So much of it still boils down to

oppression, prejudice and failure to make moral choices.

"I wanted to show how we are all responsible in the end. I also wanted it to be more than just a dark history and that's why I included the love and joy that flowed from the survivors afterwards, a sign of hope."