

Water Polo Magazine Autumn 2006



AROUND THE WORLD

ON THE POOL SIDE



50 years...

In the USA, the release of the film produced by Quentin Tarantino entitled "Freedom's Fury" chronicling the unforgettable match between the Soviet Union and Hungary in the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne, is enjoying much success. The documentary including the 1956 Olympic Semi-Final water polo match between

Hungary and the Soviet Union was held in Australia as the Soviet forces were in Budapest, curbing a popular revolt. The film was officially presented in Europe during last year's LEN Congress by the President of ISHOF, Bruce Wigo. The film provoked an immediate flurry of protests from the Russian representatives, Gennady Alessin and Evgeny Sharanov who maintained to the



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President of LEN that the film in question did not represent the reality of the situation and simultaneously made us recall events that were best left forgotten. The LEN President took the initiative to not allow the

presentation of the film to continue and the whole matter was closed without further ado. Just for the record, the major promoter of the film is champion swimmer and Olympic legend, Marc Spitz.



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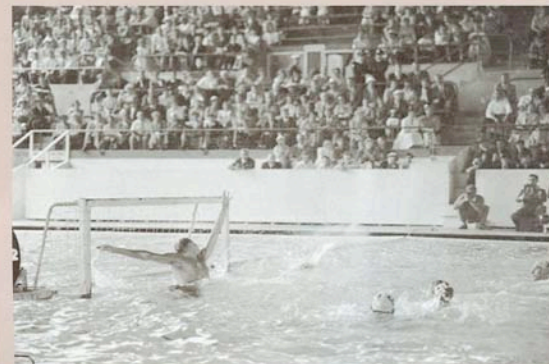
The story behind the film...

Freedom's Fury, the film documentary about the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 picks up on the historical events of 1956 and follows the Hungarian Olympic Water polo team which was inadvertently put in the spotlight due to the "blood in the water" Semi-Final match against the Soviets which ended up with yet another unwitting protagonist, Ervin Zador, the Hungarian player whose right eye was gashed. Fascinated by the burning social and political issues of the day, the brother and sister writing team, Colin Keith Gray and

Megan Raney Aarons, collectively known as "the Sibs" teamed up to write the scenario with Kristine Lacey after being inspired by a newspaper article regarding the Hungarian water polo team in 1956. Colin himself is no stranger to the sport of water polo after starting his sporting career playing high school water polo in Canada before playing for the University of Michigan in the college league. By a strange twist of fate, his coach there was Ben Quittner, coached himself by Deszo Gyarmati, a member of the 1956 Hungarian



Ervin Zador - then and now



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1. The film, Freedom's Fury with its poignant logo of Zador's gashed eye 2. Co-Producer and famous actress, Lucy Liu 3. Ervin Zador at a press conference 4. Narrator and swimming legend, Marc Spitz 5. The reunion of the surviving members of the 1956 Hungarian and Soviet Union teams in 2002



Bela Rajki, coach of the 1956 Hungarian Water polo team

USA Water polo, the Hungarian and Russian Water polo Federations and the International Swimming Hall of Fame all contributed to the film as partners. Numerous water polo bodies along with various historical archives all pulled together to fund raise to allow the project to be funded independently.

As for the key figures, tracking down Ervin Zador proved to be no problem as he was

living in America at the time whilst his other surviving team-mates were caught up with in Budapest, Hungary. The production team spent two months in the Hungarian capital shooting the scenes and they were allowed unprecedented access to the historical archives to delve into the information pertaining to the revolution and leading figures.

In unravelling a series of such politically and emotionally volatile events, the referral to such a significant sporting event was bound to provoke a whole range of emotions, both negative and positive. Some wanted to forget, others wanted to remember. However, one thing is for sure "time is the greatest healer" and that was more than evident at the emotional reunion of all the surviving members of the Hungarian and Russian teams who actually were present at that fateful match. Memories of those blood-stained 28 minutes were overshadowed as the players greeted each other emotionally. History may have told a different story, but water polo and sport keeps telling a different one, that of unity and forgiveness in a world that has no room for politics.

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