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# International sport, local contexts: Western European participation in the 1963 Games of the New Emerging Forces

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## Résumé

In a challenge to International Olympic Committee and international sport federations, the Games of the New Emerging Forces (GANEFO) brought together athletes primarily from newly decolonizing nations for a multi-sport event in Jakarta, Indonesia in November 1963. Approximately 3000 athletes from 48 countries came primarily from the newly decolonized countries of Asia and Africa, along with a number of university students from Latin America. For the most part GANEFO did not involve participants from the First World, yet the governments of these nations paid considerable attention to the event, viewing it through contemporary Western Cold-War attitudes towards Southeast Asia, the People's Republic of China, and the Soviet Union. This makes it all the more remarkable that participants from four Western European nations (Finland, France, Italy, and the Netherlands) competed at GANEFO. All of them were associated with national workers' sport associations. Using oral history interviews conducted with GANEFO participants from Finland and the Netherlands as well as primary source material from archives in Finland, France, and the Netherlands, this paper examines the participation of these potentially unlikely participants in GANEFO. These athletes were often caught in a rupture between workers' sport officials and national sport and Olympic federations. For them it was an adventure half-way around the world; and it was only upon returning that many learned they would face athletic suspensions as a result of competing in Jakarta. Some learned that their participation was part of an attempt by workers' sport officials to wrest some control over national sporting eligibility – making this international sporting event as much about local sporting tensions as the international fight against colonialism.

**Mots-Clés:** International sporting events, decolonization, workers' sport

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