

Mexico City

## 3rd Asian-African-Latin American Table Tennis Friendship Invitational Tournament

THE Third Asian-African-Latin American Table Tennis Friendship Invitational Tournament took place in Mexico City from October 12 to 27.

Delegations and representatives of 53 countries and regions (17 Asian, 18 African and 18 Latin American) participated in the tournament, the first grand table tennis meet of three continents in Latin America. The two previous tournaments were held in Peking in 1973 and Lagos, capital of Nigeria, in 1975.

The tournament was another grand gathering of unity and friendship. In both competition hall and tournament village, the general topic of conversation was the promotion of unity and friendship. Palestinian player Beidos Jawad said: "We came here from afar not to win cups but to strengthen the militant unity and friendship with friends from the third world." Nigerian woman player Olawunmi Majekodunmi said: "To us, friendship is above the title of champion." Jamaica's Cornell France pointed out: "All sports contests lose their significance if there is no friendship." Indeed, friendship weighed above winning or losing. An atmosphere of learning from each other was prevalent in both competition arena and practice rooms. Quite a number of veteran players unreservedly passed on their table tennis technique to newcomers while many up-and-coming players learnt in real earnest the strong points of others. In the course of competition, whenever the umpires found it difficult to judge some seemingly indiscernible edge balls or volley shots, players sincerely requested the winning point be awarded to opponents.

### First 16 Placings in Team Contests

**Men:** China, Japan, Indonesia, Ghana, Nigeria, Pakistan, Egypt, Singapore, Malaysia, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina, Tunisia and Peru.

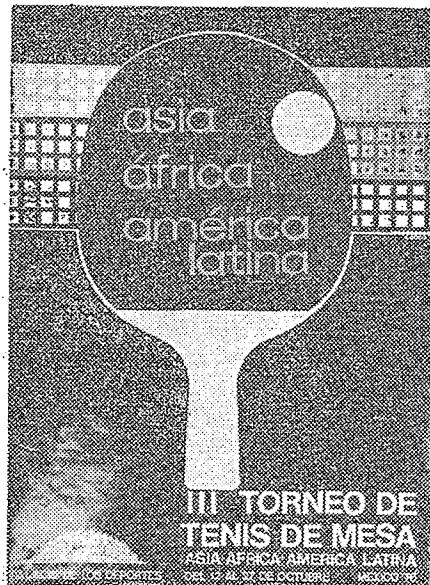
**Women:** China, Japan; Nigeria, Brazil, Malaysia, Laos, Peru, Cuba, Mexico, Guyana, Egypt, Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago, Ghana, Pakistan and Jamaica.

This fine sportsmanship stood out in sharp contrast with the vicious practice of the imperialists and social-imperialists in regarding sports technique as a right to privileges and engaging in cut-throat competition.

The tournament was also a review of the table tennis level of the three continents. The level in the various countries and regions has universally gone up in the past few years. Many players have mastered some advanced styles of play, their basic technique was more adroit and reliable and their ability in competition much stronger. The African teams from Nigeria, Ghana, Togo, Tunisia and Egypt not only have absorbed the technical characteristics of European players in using loop drives as a prelude to attacking but also have gradually grasped Asian players' skill in imparting varied spins to their service. Latin American players have also made very fast progress. A good many young players made a deep impression on the spectators by their correct movements, better physical condition and different styles of play. The teams from Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Paraguay, Brazil, Peru and Argentina are experiencing all-round development in skill. They already have become a force that cannot be neglected in the table tennis world of the three continents.

Some newcomers at the tournament outmatched veteran players and a number of strong teams lost to teams with less experience in the game. With an average age of only 16 and merely two years' experience behind it, the Lao women's team chalked up remarkable results. With an average age of 19, the Pakistan men's team defeated some strong teams. Nigeria's 15-year-old Olawunmi Majekodunmi, women's singles champion at the Fifth All-Africa Table Tennis Championships, posed a serious threat to some veteran players. The Ghanaian men's team, which placed fourth in this tournament, had an average age of 17, with two of its mainstays only 12 years old.

In the men's doubles, the Egyptian pair of Galal Ezz and Hosni Sonbol entered the semi-finals after





Players from three continents exchanging autographs and giving each other pointers on the game.

eliminating the Japanese pair of Isao Nakandakare and Masahiro Maehara 3:1. In the men's singles, the young Japanese player Masahiro Maehara defeated China's Liang Ko-liang 3:2. In the men's team contests, Ezzio Scottini of Peru outplayed veteran Japanese player Katsuyuki Abe. The up-and-coming Chinese player Kuo Yueh-hua carried off the men's singles title with a 3:1 victory over the well-known Japanese player Mitsuru Kohno. Facts show that the frequent exchanges of visits among friends in Asian, African and Latin American table tennis circles in recent years have greatly propelled the development of

table tennis in the three continents.

The tournament was held in the excellent situation of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples' struggle against imperialism, colonialism and hegemonism. The peoples of the three continents have continued to push forward their struggle against aggression, intervention and exploitation by the two superpowers, especially social-imperialism which claims to be the "natural ally" of the third world countries. This has strengthened the militant unity among the peoples of the three continents. This tournament's success also was an instance of growing militant unity.

Just as President Echeverria of Mexico, the host country, said: "The sport of table tennis has linked the table tennis players of the third world countries in friendship, once again showing its characteristic of promoting unity."

The torch of unity and friendship in the table tennis world of the three continents, lighted in Peking and passed along through Lagos to Mexico City, will continue to radiate and be handed on for ever. It has been decided that the next tournament, which will be on an even greater scale, will again be held in Asia in 1980.