



## Developing sports

OUR athletes almost did not make it to the Olympic Summer Games in Montreal. Gilberto Duavit, Presidential Assistant and Undersecretary of the Department of Youth and Sports Development told *The Republic* that: "Initially, the President did not believe in sending a delegation. So we had to convince him, and with the assurance, of course, that our participation would not entail expenditures on the part of the government."

Fortunately, Duavit said, "the private sector came forward, including two big corporations which donated more than a thousand pesos each to finance the trip."

The reluctance of the President stems from the dismal performance records of our athletes in international

competitions. By sending big delegations in the past, we only wasted precious foreign exchange and suffered the embarrassment of placing at the bottom of the competition. Today, our government through the DYSD, is preparing the ground for a comprehensive youth and sports development program.

The DYSD was created by President Marcos in December 1974. Under Presidential Decree No. 604, the government "recognizes the need for the development of youth as integral part of the national development policy, the vital role of physical fitness and amateur sports programs in the development of a healthy and alert citizenry for national progress, and that there is an urgent need to intensify a physical fitness and recreational program for the population at all ages and at all levels of the community in order to serve as a strong foundation for the inculcation of national discipline."

The President, a noted athlete in his student days, and still an active sportsman, himself heads the department. Assisting him are two undersecretaries; Presidential Assistant Gilberto Duavit and Elpidio S. Dorotheo.

On the shoulders of Duavit, 42, rests the responsibility of planning, organizing and implementing the overall programs of the DYSD, concurrent with his duties as Presidential Assistant. Duavit, a lawyer, was elected delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention. His sports background includes directorship in the



Sec. Duavit: "We will professionalize."

Republic of the Philippines Golf Association and chairmanship of the legal committee of the Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation.

In an interview with *The Republic*, Duavit stressed that the DYSD is still in its initial stage of planning and organization, and that the DYSD actually functions under the Office of the President with a task force committee as staff, aided by personnel in the Presidential Assistant's office.

Organization, Duavit outlined his plans for the organization of the department. He said that the organizational framework would be tailored to its basic coordinative and economic functions.

"Coordinative," he explained, "means that the relatively young department coordinates with other govern-

ment departments, bureaus and agencies in carrying out the various allied youth and sports activities currently going on. Economically, on the other hand, would mean fiscal restraint in terms of disbursements and effecting cost-saving measures."

Funding, obviously, is a critical need of sports and youth development programs. Recently the department launched promotional and fund-raising campaigns to send our athletes to the 1976 Montreal Olympics.

He further revealed that sports, except for basketball, has not fully come of age in the Philippines. Proof of this, he said, is that Filipino athletes lag behind in international competitions, and there's the apparent apathy on the part of the people to support other sports, if it's not basketball.

How then does the DYSD intend to solve the problem?

"We will professionalize our approach," he said, "by embarking into a national comprehensive sports program which will involve practically all people concerned with sports and its development. Also, we plan to expand the National College for Physical Education, which is being run by the DYSD, through the hiring of foreign sports experts who can teach and train our athletes."

Two bureaus. When the DYSD becomes fully operational, it shall have two bureaus: the Bureau of Youth Development and the Bureau of Physical Fitness and Sports. — J. G. Trinidad □

PORTRAITS □ Manuel H. Cos

# Coming back to the fold

THEY had fought as rebel soldiers, these brave young men to whom death was sweet if for an honorable cause. But up there in the hills dreams crumbled and fervor grew cold in the face of the truth that slowly dawned on them, bringing with it the pain of disillusionment.

And so they had turned their backs on the men they had believed were their leaders and comrades, their brothers in a common struggle. In groups, or alone, after a final realization came, they left their jungle lairs to cross over to the side of the government.

They came from different places—Cotabato, Lanao, Zamboanga, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi—at different times, but each and everyone burned with desire to take part in the efforts to better the lot of his people.

The 54 returnees (or Balikbayans, as they are popularly called in Mindanao), all former officers in the Moro National Liberation Front (MNL), went through a screening by SOUTHCOM (Southern Command, under Rear Admiral Romulo Espaldano) and then were flown to Manila to undergo military training for commission as 2nd Lieutenants in the regular army.

Back To School. They entered the School for Combat Arms (SCA) of the Philippine Army School Center (which, besides the SCA, also has other training schools such as those for logistics, engineering, signal, etc.). Established on August 1, 1971, the army school center has been the training ground for civilians who want to go into the army as officers, including would-be officers of the Women's Auxiliary Corps.

"Conductive" (to serious studying) is the word for the army school center, for it is located in the sprawling, rolling grounds of Fort Bonifacio in semi-rural Taguig, Rizal.

Before they went down to the brass tacks of their Probationary Officer's Course, the returnees first had to go through about three weeks of orientation. This was necessary considering their unique background as former rebel officers. They had to be prepared for the officers course to rid them of any mental reservations and emotional kinks that

could get in the way of their training.

After the orientation period the former rebels found themselves in the hands of army instructors intent on shaping them into officers of a different mold from what they had been before. They would take on a changed look that went deeper than the new uniforms they wore.

Under the tutelage of their instructors the returnees learned how to read maps; all about military tactics, leadership, courtesy and discipline; intelligence, operations and logistics functions, to mention only a few of the subjects they had to master. The trainees also had their communication training augmented with a special seminar on Filipino con-

army chief Maj. Gen. Rafael Zagala, at formal graduation rites last January 9.

Policy of Attraction. Before getting their certificates, the 54 new second lieutenants listened to Rear Adm. Romulo M. Espaldano, AFP Deputy Chief Staff and SOUTHCOM commander, speak on the government's policy of attraction in Mindanao.

The guest speaker said that the government intended to train 1,000 former rebels who will be integrated into the armed forces.

The continuing program to train qualified and deserving Muslims to serve in the AFP is "the answer to complex problems in Muslim Mindanao," Espaldano said.



ducted by the Surian ng Wikang Pambansa. All the time they were undergoing training the returnees received as probationary lieutenants the regular base pay of P319 monthly and allowances for clothing (P260), laundry (P10) and subsistence (P20 daily).

Graduation. Four months after they entered the Philippine Army School Center's School for Combat Arms on August 1 last year, the former rebels passed through its portals prepared for CAD (Call to Active Duty), proud holders of certificates of graduation from a course that was to them a step into a new life and direction.

The returnees received their commissionship from Brig. Gen. Fortunato U. Abat, then commander of the now defunct Central Mindanao Command (CEMCOM), who represented them

This writer talked with some of the new lieutenants a few days after their graduation and found them eager to prove themselves equal to Espaldano's exhortation. They were still waiting for their CAD and assignment to the army units to which their qualifications fit them.

"Yes, I'm very willing to be assigned in Mindanao," 2nd Lt. Abubakar Loong readily answered this writer's question. "I want to help in the development of my place and improvement of my people's situation."

With him in that training was his "brother" (not by consanguinity but in spirit, he explained) and school chum 2nd Lt. Abdulmannan Imran of Jolo, Sulu.

Neither he nor Lieutenant Loong could say where the foreign place was

They were brought there by a Volvo-powered boat at night, they said. They were never told where they were going and it remained a question mark to them during and even after their training conducted by English speaking, Malay-looking instructors.

Both Loong and Imran came unit commanders when they came back from that training. Their duties included organizing cadres and training new members. Loong and Imran worked together during their two years with the MNL, cooperating closely with Staff Officer Jerry Matba from Tawi-Tawi, one of the more well-known top-ranking officers of the rebels.

The two officers joined the MNL the same year (1971) and, as if proof of their strong friendship, they were together when they led 200 of their men (now members of the paramilitary forces under SOUTHCOM) out of the hills to return to the government fold.

Disillusionment. But in fact it had taken more than their personal relationship to tear them away from the MNL: they had seen the truth about the organization and felt they could not stay part of it for long.

"We found out that the MNL was Communist-oriented and they were only using us to further the ideological causes of the organization," Imran said. The other lieutenants nodded in agreement.

The longer they stayed with the MNL the more their suspicions grew. The rebel leaders had impressed them with their concern for their people, but as time passed, events and the actions of the ranking officers slowly wore thin their facades. They would not, for example, take in the old, religious leaders their subalterns respected. They wanted only fresh, open minds they could easily indoctrinate. They used religion as they did other common denominators like the economic plight of the people to win their sympathy, to gain support, more members.

That was their main reason for leaving the rebel movement, articulate Imran said with the rest's vocal agreement.

Another was the series of moves of President Marcos to bring justice and improve the social and economic conditions of the Muslims. The President means business, the lieutenants said, and they all wanted to share the difficult task of putting Mindanao and its long-neglected Muslim populace on the road to progress and better life. □