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BENEFITS SEEN
IN TAIWANESE
LAND REFORM

MISSOULA, Mont.---

Dramatic contrasts between individualistic and communal forms of land ownership in Taiwan and Communist China, respectively, are resulting in noticeable differences in agricultural production in the two nations, according to a University of Montana faculty member.

Dr. Frank B. Bessac, a UM associate professor of anthropology, said division by the government of large landlord estates on Taiwan as part of the land reform program, and redistribution of the land to the farmer-tenants has resulted in an increase in agricultural production, a more effective democracy and has laid the base for current rapid industrialization in Taiwan.

"On the other hand," Dr. Bessac continued, "the introduction of communes in Communist China has been accompanied by a decrease in agricultural production."

Dr. Bessac is completing a book embodying more than a year's research on the social effects of land reform in Taiwan, under a \$15,047 research fellowship from the Behavioral Sciences Training Branch of the National Institute of Mental Health. The initial research was conducted under a research fellowship provided by the Agricultural Development Council.

"There is no doubt that farm production in Taiwan, formerly the Island of Formosa, has been going up for the last 20 years," Dr. Bessac emphasized. He said the Taiwanese production upswing is due to a number of interrelated factors--redistribution of land, formation of farmers' service cooperatives and introduction of new crops and techniques. He said benefits from these changes are apparent.

Dr. Bessac said the Chinese Peoples' Republic or Chinese Communists came to power on the Mainland of China in 1949 chiefly because of the ability to complete the land reform only begun, or in other areas only promised, by the Chinese Nationalists.

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"The land reform promised the farmers by the Communists in 1949," he continued, "was nullified 10 years later by the organization of communes, where everybody works the land together under the state's direction.

"Recentralization of land ownership in the Chinese People's Republic was a betrayal of the revolution, at least so far as the Chinese farmers," Dr. Bessac explained. "Mainland farm production began dropping almost immediately and continues to do so to the extent that communalism is enforced."

He said a comparison of Mainland China's communally organized agriculture and the Taiwanese agriculture organized around the individual operator "would indicate the latter type of economic organization is more productive for industries that can be operated under familial or other types of direct management."

Dr. Bessac said results of his study may enable faculty and students to relate information about Taiwanese land reform to general theories of social and economic change.

Dr. Bessac, who has been a UM faculty member since 1965, received his bachelor's degree at the University of Pacific, Stockton, Calif., in 1946, and in 1957 he was graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, with a master's degree. He was awarded his doctorate at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1958. Between 1943 and 1948 Dr. Bessac attended Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., and Fujen University, Peiping, China.

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