

Porter surprised by China's current law system

By TOM JACKSON
Of the Emerald

Projections of future socialist societies usually bring to mind iron-clad control of the masses through restrictive laws and awesome law enforcement networks. But according to former U.S. Representative Charles Porter after a 14-day tour of Mainland China, such a picture doesn't reflect the current law system in that country.

"I was surprised," he said. "My stereotypes were not carried out. I came away thinking they're not fanatics. I expected to see outward indications of force."

Speaking at the University law school Wednesday about the Chinese law system, Porter relayed impressions based on his interview with "a man who said he was a judge." He expressed uncertainty of the judge's official capacity since information was subject to translation through two interpreters who accompanied him throughout his trip, under the supervision of the Chinese travel service.

Porter cited the lack of a set criminal code as a major difference between the Chinese and American systems.

According to the judge he inter-

viewed, the "court relies on the masses to investigate" crimes, and a person's fellow workers may arrest him with permission from the revolutionary party. A preliminary trial is held by peers.

If the accused is found guilty, a judge goes to the place where the person works and selects some of his fellow workers to aid in the investigation. The judge then reports to a full court consisting of the judge and six of his colleagues. The accused usually defends himself — there are no defense attorneys. There are, however, professional prosecutors.

Prison confinement includes forced labor and indoctrination, but no one is forced to work beyond personal capabilities. After the term is served, the person returns to the work unit to be supervised by peers.

"The death penalty is rare," said Porter.

Porter said qualifications necessary to become a judge include outstanding work, awareness of class struggle and rate of culture. The judge interviewed is, according to Porter, an apprentice rubber-worker and had three years of formal schooling. He is paid the equivalent of \$30 per month.

"I'm impressed by what I saw," said Porter. "I was impressed by what the judge said. Maybe it was all an elaborate show for those

people who are kept on the track and kept in tow by interpreters," but he added, "So far as I could find out, they were not setting me up."

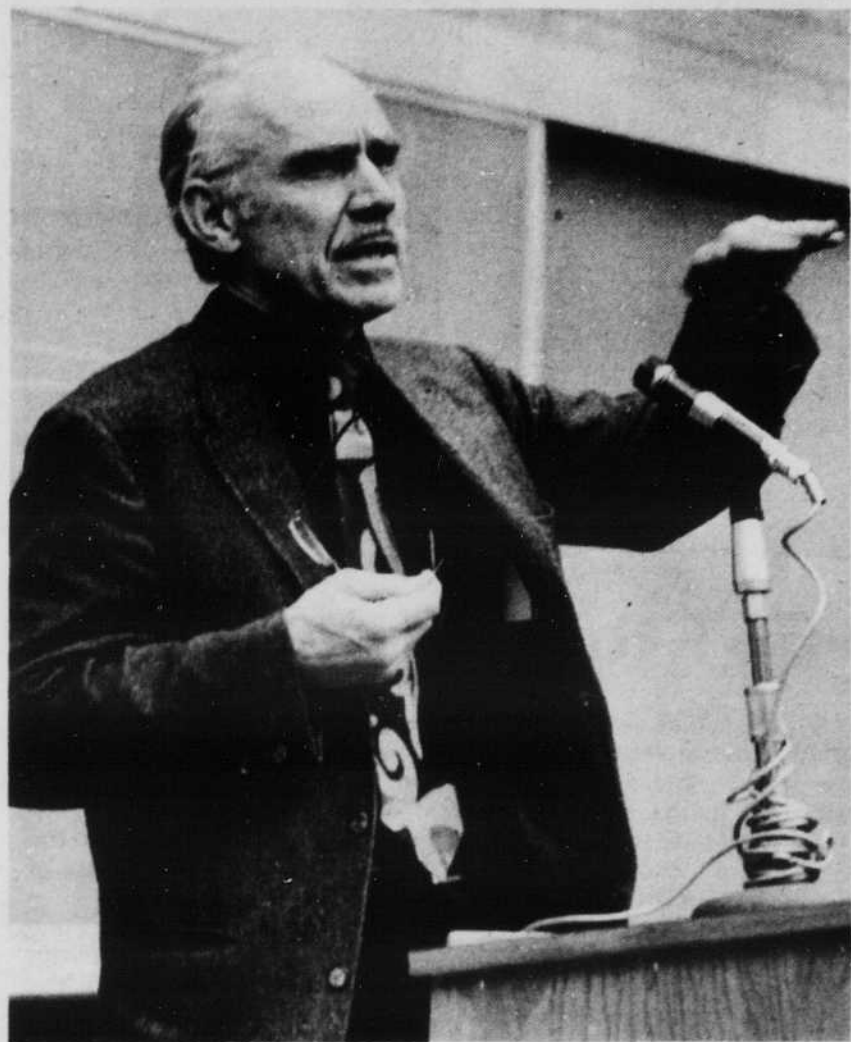


Photo by Kerrie Steinhauer

Charles Porter

Action Now offers tool bank, remodeling

Remodeling houses and raising barns doesn't confound Action Now workers. They've got the skills and the tools to take care of construction problems.

And they're willing to share.

The group loans tools of all sorts to any student without cost. They tend to throw in a little free advice as well.

Action Now has changed in recent months from an activist agency to a service program with more long-range goals, according to member Dan Jacobson.

"Being the end point of a referral system, we have to keep our focus on something we can work on effectively," Jacobson said.

The group's main project is development and expansion of the tool bank but it will also have a hand in renovating a barn in the Bethel district for use as a community center.

Carpentry tools are in greatest abundance but the tool bank can also help people working on automotive, machinery, welding or gardening projects. Students can pick up the tools Mondays and Wednesdays at 1557 Agate St. from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. when they present a University identification card.

Tools are loaned for one week periods and program director David Russell says most are in continual service. He estimates 15 students use the service each week.

Workers are currently remodeling the basement of Whitebird, 341 E. 12th St., for use as a community-oriented tool bank. The new facility was to open this month but shortages of materials and volunteer labor have delayed completion until spring.

Enlarging the Agate Street student facility is a top priority for the group, according to Russell. He has asked the Incidental Fee Committee (IFC) for \$2,500 to purchase property adjacent to the tool bank. Russell says the extra space would be used to store and recycle building materials.

The group has requested \$2,765 of incidental fee money to maintain the program next year. That's an \$801 increase over last year.

Part of the increase will be used to hire a secretary, according to Jacobson.

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Jefferson Elevator can become a small town serving local craftspeople. A restaurant, cinema, sandwich shops, and a coffee house are planned for the First Floor to complement the art and craft areas. The Second Floor will serve people with heavy-duty production needs such as: potters, glass-blowers or metal sculptors. A coffee house, sandwich shops, common space and showers will share this area. The roof area of 15,000 sq. ft. is available at 15 cents per sq. ft. and could accommodate a nursery-greenhouse as well as arts and crafts.

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