

The developing role of the Western Australian branch of the Australia China Friendship Society reflects what was occurring both nationally and internationally. As a people we are affected by the times in which we live, so it is worthwhile reviewing significant historical incidents that have affected the Branch's life.

In 1946 China, under the leadership of Chiang Kai Shek, was an original member of the United Nations and joined the Soviet Union, the United States of America, Great Britain and France on the powerful United Nations Security Council. When the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) was founded in 1949, Chiang Kai Shek and the remnant of his National Party formed a government in exile on Taiwan, then known as Formosa.



Professor C.P. Fitzgerald

To coincide with Mao Zhedong's declaration of the Peoples Republic of China in October 1949, Charles Patrick Fitzgerald, accepted an invitation from the Australian National University (ANU) to give a series of lectures on the modern Republic. Fitzgerald was born in 1901 and lived in China between 1923 and 1949. He was fluent in Mandarin and although lacking a university qualification, was a recognised authority on revolutionary China. Fitzgerald's early lectures endeavoured to show that while Soviet Communism followed a Marxist urban model Chinese revolutions gained strength from the peasantry and in this respect China and the Soviet Union were quite different. ANU recognised that a Ph.D. was not always a

measure of expertise and offered Fitzgerald a professorship that he retained until December 1967 and during those years he was acknowledged as Australia's leading authority on modern China and his lectures were popular. His growing prestige and Canberra location brought him close to Members of the Federal Parliament who favoured diplomatic links with the Peoples Republic of China. One was the Queensland born Tasmanian Senator, Bill Morrow who had addressed the Australian Senate in October 1949 on the importance of cultivating trade and friendship links with the new China.

Against this background of politics and ideology in 1951 the Rev. H. Aiken convened and chaired a meeting of Melbourne citizens to form the Australia China Society (ASC) with Mr (later Professor) C.P. Fitzgerald as the founding president. In 1983 the National committee and all branches changed the name to 'Australia China Friendship Society' (ACFS).

In 1952, the Rev. H. Aiken and C.P. Fitzgerald convinced Sydney of the importance of a New South Wales branch of the Australia China Society and Doug Lindsay was nominated as the first President. Victoria followed soon afterwards. Bill Morrow was a foundation member of the New South Wales Australia China Society (ACSNSW) and later the Queensland ACS president. The pioneer branches endorsed the principles of cultural understanding, trade relationships and peaceful relations between Australia and the Peoples Republic of China.

Also in 1952 a five person ACS delegation attended a Peace Conference in Beijing and their report, *We Talked Peace with Asia*, sold 20,000 copies. The following year, Bill Morrow visited Beijing and was, on a later visit, a guest of Premier Zhou Enlai. This indicated a growing Australian interest in the events occurring behind the 'Bamboo Curtain'. In Western Australia, the only outlet for New China publications was the Communist Party Pioneer Bookshop on the corner of Bulwer and Stirling Streets with the windows protected against vandals and anti-China protests.



Signing of Diplomatic Relations between Australia and China

A major change in the relationship, occurred three weeks after the election of Gough Whitlam on December 5 1972 as the Australian Prime Minister when the Chinese and Australian Ambassadors to France, Huang Zhen and Alan Renouf, met in Paris to sign a joint communiqué to establish diplomatic relations between our two Nations. and, on 4th May 1973 Chinese Ambassador Wang Guoquan arrived at Canberra and presented his credentials to the Governor General, Sir Paul Hasluck.

In that year the National ACS Council extended friendly greetings to the Chinese Peoples Friendship Association.

The first Chinese consulate was established in Perth in October 1994, but its location was only temporary. The ACFSWA president, Les Greive an experienced banker showed Li Shugang the East Perth site on which the West Australian Consulate has been built. Architects utilised the beautiful riverside location. Its spacious premises makes it one of the more attractive consulates in Australia and certainly the best located of the Perth foreign consulates.



First Consul General Cai Chuan with Dr Wally Frick (left) and Les Grieve

The sincere welcome provided to the consulate staff allowed them to make many friends. Li Shugang's subsequent appointment as Consul General in 2006 was warmly welcomed by the many friends he had made during his original tour.



Consul General Tian Junting at the opening of the Consulate

The city and the ACFS have provided warm welcomes to successive Consul Generals:

The Branch maintains a close relationship with the staff of the consulate, hosting many informal occasions. This extended to visiting Chinese dignitaries for instance in 1997, the Branch hosted an afternoon tea for the Chinese Ambassador Mr Chou Chiu-Yeh and his wife, Madame Chang Hueh, at Les Grieve's home during their visit to Western Australia to visit the Hammersley Iron mine set up in the Pilbara and do a tour of the South West.