To some students of Chinese Communism, Ai Ssu-ch'i (1910-1966) [C1] may not be a familiar personality and reference to him as the apostle of Chinese Communism may possibly cause some astonishment. To be sure, Ai Ssu-ch'i was not one of those who introduced Communism or Marxism-Leninism to China, nor was he one of those who imposed such an ideology upon the Chinese people by sheer political power. Ch'en Tu-shiu, Li Ta-Chao, and Li Ta [C2], three of the original thirteen (or twelve, according to others) founders of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and prolific writers of Marxist and Marxist-Leninist ideological tracts can legitimately be called apostles of Chinese Communism because both their organizational and theoretical contributions were extensive and long-lasting. Yet, the two former confined themselves primarily to writing short essays and polemical articles, and never presented Marxist-Leninist philosophy as a coherent system, while the last – though recognized as probably the highest authority in the systematization of Communism in China2 – had always remained on a very speculative level, reaching very few people. Even among rank and file Communists, not too many know his name. On the other hand, Mao Tse-tung [C3] – who was the most influential in introducing Marxism-Leninism into China – should be considered the ‘Master’ rather than the ‘Apostle’ of Chinese Communism. It is Mao who determined the adoption and the interpretation of Marxism-Leninism in Chinese Communism. Though such power of determination was derived from his awesome political authority, it is not yet clear whether it was due to Mao’s discursive genius or to his statesmanship that his brand of Communism was accepted.

As to Ai Ssu-ch'i – a radical Chinese Communist intellectual who had never wielded any significant organizational power within or outside the Communist Party – he reached millions of young minds through his ingenious popularizations of Marxism-Leninism. Many of those who had
been educated by Ai's pen later became the backbone of the Communist Revolution. It seems, too, that the philosophical component of the famous thought of Mao Tse-tung has also been nourished by the 'vernacular' dialectical materialism, written by Ai. The writings of Ai, particularly during the earlier years – in the middle 1930's – were tremendously attractive and popular. For example, *Philosophy for the Masses* [C4] ran into its fourth edition within five months of its first appearance in book form in January 1936, and into its 16th edition three years later in 1939. Father O. Brière S. J. has reported that the same volume ran into its 32nd edition twelve years after its appearance. Yet, Brière's count ended only in the early 1940's. Judging by the available evidence Ai's *Philosophy for the Masses*, his first 'Acta Apostolica', had been revised, enlarged and reprinted several times up to the end of 1951. There is no doubt that copies printed by the end of the 1940's and the early 1950's would amount to millions. When the present author was in his eighth grade in high school, at the time the Communists were completing their conquest of China, Ai's philosophy was among the first books to come to his attention. It was revered by many cadres as the 'Catechism' for indoctrinating and converting students. *Philosophy for the Masses* is the manual Ai wrote as an introduction to dialectical materialism. In other words, he considered it as the treatise about the laws of nature and of the mind. It is only half of the supposed whole of Marxism-Leninism, however, since historical materialism – or the laws of human society – was not included. Because of the Japanese invasion, the writing of the latter part was postponed until 1948, when he was appointed as professor of philosophy at Northern China University at Shih-chia-chuan, headquarters of the Chinese Communists during the final phase of the Civil War. The second 'Acta Apostolica' proved to be as successful as the first. Since its publication in 1948, the *Short History of Social Development* [C5] was revised several times before it came to be known as *Historical Materialism – Lectures on the History of Social Development* [C6], in 1950. The spectacular thing is that within exactly one year of its original publication (from April 1950 to March 1951) it ran into its 10th edition in the Peking Publication House alone and was, again, revised. In another year, in May 1952, it was in its 16th edition with new revisions, and a month later, in June 1952, a 17th edition was published. The reader should bear in mind that this and other important books of Communist ideology have been published simultaneously in various major