“And is it not frequently the case that there is a contradiction between one’s intellectual choice and one’s mode of conduct? Which therefore would be the real conception of the world: that logically affirmed as an intellectual choice? or that which emerges from the real activity of each man, which is implicit in his mode of action? And since all action is political, can one not say that the real philosophy of each man is contained in its entirety in his political action? This contrast between thought and action, i.e. the co-existence of two conceptions of the world, one affirmed in words and the other displayed in effective action, is not simply a product of self-deception. Self-deception can be an adequate explanation for a few individuals taken separately, or even for groups of a certain size, but it is not adequate when the contrast occurs in the life of great masses. In these cases the contrast between thought and action cannot but be the expression of profounder contrasts of a social historical order. It signifies that the social group in question may indeed have its own conception of the world, even if only embryonic; a conception which manifests itself in action, but occasionally and in flashes—when, that is, the group is acting as an organic totality. But this same group has, for reasons of submission and intellectual subordination, adopted a conception which is not its own but is borrowed from another group; and it affirms this conception verbally and believes itself to be following it, because this is the conception which it follows in “normal times” —that is when its conduct is not independent and autonomous, but submissive and subordinate” (Selections from the Prison Notebooks, p. 631-2)

2. “What matters is the criticism to which such an ideological complex is subjected by the first representatives of the new historical phase. This criticism makes possible a process of differentiation and change in the relative weight that the elements of the old ideologies used to possess. What was previously secondary and subordinate, or even incidental, is now taken to be primary—becomes the nucleus of a new ideological and theoretical complex. The old collective will dissolves into its contradictory elements since the subordinate ones develop socially, etc.” (op.cit,. p. 427)

The philosophy of praxis “ is a philosophy that has been liberated (or is attempting to liberate itself) from any unilateral and fanatical ideological elements; it is consciousness full of contradictions, in which the philosopher himself, understood both individually and as an entire social group, not only grasps the contradictions, but posits himself as an element of the contradiction and elevates this element to a principle of knowledge and therefore of action “ (op.cit., p. 747)

“If the philosophy of praxis affirms theoretically that every “truth” believed to be eternal and absolute has had practical origins and has represented a “provisional” value (historicity of every conception of the world and of life), it is still very difficult to make people grasp “practically” that such an interpretation is valid also for the philosophy of praxis itself, without in so doing shaking the convictions that are necessary for action. This is, moreover, a difficulty that recurs for every historicist philosophy” (op.cit., p. 749-50)

“As a result even the philosophy of praxis tends to become an ideology in the worst sense of the word, that is to say a dogmatic system of eternal and absolute truths” (op.cit., p. 750)

“Mass adhesion or non-adhesion to an ideology is the real critical test of the rationality and historicity of modes of thinking.” (op. cit., p. 652)