

“The Transformation of Education and Democracy”

A Talk with Prof. Stephen Ball at University College London, October 2017

By Dr. Beat Kissling, Zürich

Stephen Ball is Karl Mannheim Professor of Sociology of Education at the Institute of Education, University College London.

Some of his recent publications are Networks, New Governance and Education (Stephen J. Ball & Carolina Junemann, The Policy Press, Bristol 2012), Global Education Inc. – New Policy Networks and The Neo-Liberal Imaginary (Stephen Ball, Routledge NY, 2012), Policy Paper – Education, Justice and Democracy: The struggle over ignorance and opportunity (Stephen Ball, Center for Labour and Social Studies, London 2013), World Yearbook of Education 2015: Elites, Privilege and Excellence: The National and Global Redefinition of Advantage (Agnes Van Zanten & Stephen J. Ball (Hrsg.), Routledge NY 2015).

My purpose for meeting Professor Ball was to learn more about the highly controversial school reforms and developments in England, as these are very similar to changes being made in the German-speaking part of Europe, though the process in England is at a much later stage. Stephen Ball is one of the most renowned English professors of education who have been doing comprehensive research into the international background of these 'reforms', which involve many large firms in the 'global education industry' together with international organizations such as the OECD. All of these organizations are promoting the mingling of public services (state schools) with the private interests of investors and, in doing so, they are redefining education to establish it as just another lucrative market for big business. Prof. Ball is a distinguished researcher and expert on studies concerning the provenance of this 'reform' agenda, which has been implemented in all European countries within the last 20 years at least. In Switzerland, Austria and Germany we hear very little about such studies, although the knowledge and insight they provide would be of great importance in the discussions about the necessity and the spirit of these so-called reforms.

Beat Kissling: “I’m very happy to have the opportunity of talking to you, because, as I told you in my letter, we too are experiencing a lot of reforms that are very similar to what you describe, for instance, in your book Networks, New Governance and Education.

Let me introduce our talk with some explanations concerning the developments in education in the German-speaking countries, with a focus on Switzerland:

In Switzerland, but also in Germany and Austria, many reforms that began modestly in the 1980s and were not very much approved by teachers, actually came to life later. They really started off with the Bologna reform in 1999 and with the PISA studies in 2000. It is incredible that within such a short period we have had an enormous number of changes leading us more and more towards education systems like those in the US or elsewhere in the Anglo-Saxon world. Many of your descriptions correspond closely to what we face in our country. Reforms involve the weakening of the local authorities and the establishment of a customer-oriented way of addressing parents. They are no longer looked upon as citizens, but are treated like customers; moreover, it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish between private

stakeholders and representatives of the state, who have influence on and responsibility for the surveillance and transformations of our schools. The analysis that Wendy Brown carried out in her book Undoing the Demos very accurately describes what is happening, especially on the political level, in all dimensions of society.

We have a gradual, looming breakdown in the schools which is revealing itself slowly. It is sort of a lenti-problem. As a teacher who has taught at all levels, I observe — and I hear from my younger colleagues who have children in the lower classes — that students, especially the younger ones in primary and secondary schools, are getting more and more depressed. A new manner of teaching (you can hardly call it 'teaching' anymore) is all about redefining the role of the teacher to that of a moderator, a facilitator, a coach. And the enforced digitalization of teaching and learning has left students very much alone with their computer programs to fend for themselves. The trouble is that there is hardly any substantial public opposition to these sweeping changes, even though everything is so much contrary to what we had and did 20 years ago, when the education in Swiss public schools was really very successful. Furthermore, within the whole range of political parties there is hardly any discussion. All parties, even the left-wing parties, claim that the newly-implemented national curriculum is an important step in the unquestionably right direction. An intensive testing system—said to ensure quality—is also being established and has met with widespread approval, even by the social-democratic party.

Yet, in reality we are dismantling the high-quality system we once had. At the center of our education system was sound teacher training. Everything relied on well-trained teachers who were able to teach absolutely self-responsibly and independently. A core value of the teaching profession, of course, was academic freedom. Teachers were controlled by a system of democratic, local authorities, a system which has recently been weakened in exactly the way you describe in your studies. Other than very few professors, e.g. Roland Reichenbach, hardly anyone in Switzerland dares to criticize almost any aspect of the 'reforms' openly—especially the so-called 'progressive' teaching methods and the new system of teacher training. Hence, they are not discussed at all: not among experts on the academic level, not in schools, and certainly not in public.

Some years ago, I wanted to find out why in Switzerland, where the population has no little experience with democratic debate and decision making, it has been strategically possible to inhibit public discourse and suppress opposition to this entire transformation process in our schools. My assumption was that something in politics must have weakened the whole democratic process. I then stumbled across *The New Public Management (NPM)* – a theory about the transformation of the ordinary state administration system – in a student textbook on economics and administration by a professor of economics at the University of St. Gallen. When I read it, I suddenly understood that within the NPM there is a completely new concept of the role of the state, a concept that turns everything upside down. Many fundamental elements of democracy, such as the division of power and the separation of private interests and state institutions, are more or less abolished. In the end, as Wendy Brown says, it is dismantling the *demos*. The trouble is that nearly all the critical people I know in Switzerland, Germany and Austria criticize pedagogical aspects of the theory, but they very seldom do research on the question of motivation or political or financial interests that may underlie these reforms. On the other hand, when I read what you or Susan L. Robertson or Antoni Verger write about the outcomes of your research, it's very different. There are hardly any sociologists of education in Switzerland. It seems to be a field which is considered unworthy of serious research. But, on the contrary, this direction of research is what is really missing.

We need academics who dare not only to ask themselves, but also to ask in public: Does this development really come out of the blue? What is the strategy behind steering education in this direction? What is the theory and what are the goals behind this agenda?

There is only one Swiss professor I know in the German-speaking area who has done research with his graduate students on what happened in the 1960s when the OECD came up with the idea of changing and unifying educational systems internationally. Above all, the US had an interest in this. At that time, the OECD did not succeed, but they were able to establish themselves as a sort of supervisory authority for the OECD countries during the 1990s. I have tried to find people in Switzerland who are politically independent, who don't have stubborn left-wing or right-wing views and who are not afraid of saying something that is not popular and may even lead to their being decried or defamed.

Moreover, it is not only the education system I'm talking about, but all the public services, e.g. our health and postage systems, the latter of which now functions to all intents and purposes more like a private company than a public service. For reasons of efficiency they have started to reduce the number of postal stations throughout the country, to the effect that villages in the countryside will no longer have adequate postal service and will be denied the public transit formerly provided by public postal buses. Instead, the state post office is now expanding its postal bank and trying to become a big player within the banking system.

I think there is in Europe, in general, a lack of knowledge about what kind of research has been done in England. That is why I want to make your studies available for us, in order to give people in the German-speaking countries the chance to know that there does exist thorough research into the origins of all these strange 'reforms' and to make it clear that they originally had nothing to do with any Swiss tradition. This should be part of the discussion; it should be part of what people know, so they can think about whether this is really the education they wish for their children. It is imperative that there should be an international dialogue to reflect on the question of what can and should be done to control this ongoing 'reform' agenda.

I am a member of the advisory board of an international organization in the German-speaking countries called the Association for Education and Knowledge. "Knowledge" is especially mentioned in the title because of the vanishing importance of knowledge in our educational system. Things have already gone much farther in England, I suppose. I have learned about the privatization of water and I have seen your problem with the privatized railways. When I happened to be in Leeds a few days ago, the guards were on strike to protest dismissals. We have begun to see the first stages of this process in Switzerland as well. People feel helpless; they don't really understand what's going on; they're not informed; nothing is explained.

Stephen Ball: "I think one of the many things which is fundamental to the possibility of opposition or the possibility of debate is that almost all aspects of public sector provision – from schools to post offices and everything in between – are now reworked and thought of as set of technocratic problems. The solutions to problems, change, innovation and reform seem to be best-dealt with by technocratic experts, usually from business or business backgrounds. This severely limits any possibility of democratic debate. Public sector reforms are no longer a political issue, they're regarded as technocratic issues which are solved by the import of forms of expertise from business. So then political engagement and debates around values and purposes actually become an obstacle, they are seen as slow and unwieldy, and they are removed. As you say, the role of local authorities in debating educational issues is being slowly reduced or marginalised. There's no space to actually ask questions about what is happening.

No democratic fora for debate. A second problem is that the discussions that ensue in relation to education reforms focus almost exclusively on the form of delivery - performance, performance management, commercialization, privatization. So, we should have tests, we should have measurement, we should have comparison, we should have commercialization, we should have privatization. There's a disconnect between that and the substance of education. But also what is missed is that in fact, in very fundamental ways, the changes in the form of delivery act back on the substance. They actually change what education means, change pedagogy, change the role of the teacher. But all of those things are obscured by a focus on a change of form. The purposes of education, the meaning of education, is lost sight of. So, everywhere now education is measured and tested. You have to test – that's the global orthodoxy. But there's little understanding of the feedback effects of testing on substance, on pedagogy, on the experience of the student."

BK: "Teachers who have to teach to the test."

SB: "Yes, exactly and one of the side effects of that is raised levels of stress experienced by students, and teachers, a decline in their well-being in terms of their educational experience. Furthermore, testing often leads to the elimination of the parts of the curriculum that are not tested and therefore not valued, particularly the arts, music, drama, etc. Again, that's an effect of change of form on substance. That's a really significant and important political problem which I think is event in almost every country that has signed up to the reform process. So, it becomes very difficult for people like me to be heard, because what I have to say is seen to be irrelevant, because it doesn't relate directly to the driving up of standards, the improvement of performance, which becomes the main concern of the politics of education. Politics is reduced to that. In fact, I think many parents, probably the majority of parents, are actually very unsure about these things. But on the other hand, they loathe to do anything or to say anything or respond, because they're worried that somehow their children might lose out if they're not participating in tests. Somehow, they think, they need to be encouraging and supportive of their children to do all their tests because that's going to have implications for their future career in some way. Although they have all these doubts, they either don't express them or certainly very few of them actually do anything about it."

BK: "There is hardly any public criticism by parents?"

SB: "That's right! The only exception is in the US around testing. There is actually a massive opting out movement in the United States, that is parents who opt their children out of testing."

BK: "What do they do instead? Do they have to send them to a private school where there is no testing?"

SB: "No, it's kind of an artifact of every state having their own constitution and that until recently education policies were made at the state and not the federal level. As a result of first the federal *No-child-left-behind-act* and the subsequent *every student succeeds act*, every school is tested regularly. The focus may be on the school and the teachers rather than on the student in terms of how the results are constructed. In New York, for example, because of parental opposition, the tests are used to evaluate the teachers and the schools but not the students. In addition, New York is one of a significant minority of that has a law giving parents the right to opt their child out of any testing. So, all they have to do is they send a letter to the principal of their school, saying 'I don't want my child to participate in the testing.' On the testing days, they are required to go to school but are given something else to do."

BK: "And what about what is going on with the lessons in school? Are they able to continue school normally?"

SB: "It doesn't matter to the child. The testing does in some sense identify children who need remedial input, but it's high stakes for the school, because it has implications for the school; for the school board. But it doesn't have high stake implications for the children themselves. The testing is not related to their grade point average. So, there's no risk to the child in terms of opting out. In the United States, there is an *Opt Out* organization in almost every state."

BK: "Are they organized as one big organization?"

SB: "Not technically but there are organizations like Fairtest.org that regularly publish updates on the resistance to standardized tests, and New York State Allies for Public Education, which organizes resistance statewide and provides data on the number of students opting out for every school district in the state. Approximately **670,000** children who opted out nation-wide 2015."

BK: "Where can you get information about that?"

SB: "On the internet! If you just search for 'opt out testing United States'.

BK: "In Switzerland many parents have to work with their children nearly every evening and on the weekend because they have trouble getting along in school on their own. We have no real tradition of private schools. Up to now, state schools have had such a good reputation that private schools never seemed to be necessary. We only had a few Catholic or religious schools, where religious values were emphasized, and a few international schools. So we had hardly any private schools and especially no schools belonging to the global education industry. Normally in Switzerland everybody sends his child to a state school, where parents don't have to pay much.

However, this is starting to change. Nowadays children are considered (right from the start) as entrepreneurs who have to decide for themselves how quickly they want to advance with their learning. So there are children with an academic family background, who already have good language knowledge, alongside others who start with a poor vocabulary and no parents to help them if they have difficulty. Social inequality exists from the very beginning. There are parents who can pay for additional lessons and others who can't. Thus, there is inequality of education, a widening gap, which is completely contrary to the political culture in Switzerland. Considering these facts, it is strange that there is nearly no opposition to this new system. One and a half years ago, together with a colleague, I published a brochure entitled "*Einspruch*" (Objection!), because we were furious that the media always associated political criticism of educational reforms with right-leaning attitudes. Traditionally, we're rather left-leaning. That's why we assembled voices of well-known people with a left-wing or left-liberal worldview, but all in some way involved in education, in a brochure. In the end, we sold 12,000 copies. Now we have the idea of collecting the parents' experiences and observations about their children's problems in schools and we are planning a new brochure including these perceptions along with some exemplary commentaries. We think that it is the parents who must initiate the turnaround. I'm really a bit upset that you in England, where the situation has already become worse, are not even invited to give your view of the situation."

SB: "Not anymore! Particularly because we've got a Conservative government that is certainly not interested in anything that I and people like me have to say. There is now an overbearing emphasis on, as I said, technocratic solutions. It's those people, who can come along with technocratic interventions that can be shown statistically to improve performance – with 'what works', who are the ones whose voices are being listened to."

BK: "Experts."

SB: "But the point you make about deficiency in the system and about the parents making an increasing input into their children's education, points, I think, to the other compounding factor in all this. With various financial crises, and changes in the nature of the state and the reform in the public sector, and the restructuring of the labor market, a significant section of the middle class now feels under enormous pressure. The competition for positions and for the reproduction of social advantage is now meaning that a lot of parents are feeling insecure about their children's future: 'Will my child be able to get a job like me? Will they be able to become a doctor or a lawyer or a public professional of some kind?' That means that they feel they need to put more resources into their children's education to achieve or maintain advantage over other children. So that makes it even less likely that they're going to actually raise their voice in a questioning way in relation to educational practice. This need to maintain advantage is evident, for example, in the massive growth in private tutoring around the world, in Southeast Asia, Europe, and the US. You can buy advantage for your child in competitive exams. You can get your child to a better university, you can get to higher status course for your child.

So, that compounds the lack of opposition to the process of change, because there is this sense of uncertainty, threat, risk, anxiety that parents have about their children's education. So, they don't want to raise questions, they don't want to point to problems, they don't want to articulate their discomforts about what's happening. That's perverse in a way, because a lot of parents are investing in their children's education, but at the same time feel that education has been impoverished, because it has been reduced to a set of sterile practices, using teaching and learning software, or it's reduced to test practicing and preparing for tests. But it is very difficult to intervene in that, it's very difficult to break into that cycle of anxiety and reform, it's very difficult to challenge the orthodoxies of performance and performance management. I think, we're in a very bad place in terms of education at this moment in time."

BK: "Don't you have allies of some sort in politics or the media? If you can find an allied politician in the parliament in Switzerland, you can try to bring up the issue and to show that there has to be some public discussion. Special groups in parliament can then investigate the *status quo* and question experts to get an idea of the problem. There is some limited possibility to promote debate, but the trouble is really that there are obviously powerful entities behind this agenda. For example, I found out that the OECD has organized three conferences up to now connecting companies of the *Global Education Industry* with the ministers of education of the OECD countries. Did you know that? They try to enforce artificially a close co-operation between state representatives and big business in education."

SB: "There's a third element in all this, which is that reform creates enormous opportunities for profit. Because profit in other areas of business activity is more difficult, many publishing companies, digital companies, IT companies, see education as an opportunity for new areas

of profit, particularly around digitalization. There's a huge interest from the private sector in education, either direct selling of services on a private basis or contracting to state systems and running state systems on a contract basis".

BK: "What are the first two then; which ones do you mean?"

SB: "Well, first there's the orthodoxies of reform and the idea of testing as the only mechanism for ensuring quality education. It's based upon the importance of performance management techniques drawn from business and then applied to all of the aspects of the public sector. A performance management regime. So, you manage the system by measuring it and setting targets and disciplining it. And, second, there's competition. You discipline the failing sectors or the underperforming sectors. One of the ways of disciplining them is to contract them out to the private sector. So, you've got performance management as the state's method for running its systems. You've got the pressure on the labor market, particularly for middle class positions, which is increasing competition between students and parents in terms of the use of resources. And you have the financial interests of the private sector in seeking to deliver or supplement state education services. All of those things are going on at the same time and they're creating a perfect storm for the total reform of education and what it means to be educated, what it means to be a teacher, what it means to be a learner.

BK: "The state serves as a sort of instrument for industry?"

SB: "The state reforms itself in this way, the state becomes less and less responsible for delivering services and more and more for commissioning and monitoring services. So, everything is reduced to a financial calculation, basically. It relates performance to cost. If the private sector can deliver things like the postal services on an effective performance basis at a lower cost, then you privatize it. It's not a political decision, it's presented as a simply commercial, financial, technocratic decision. In that process the state becomes a different phenomenon, it becomes a different set of strategies and increasingly depoliticized. It's no longer an arena of politics, it's an arena of technical solutions."

BK: "Is there no more democracy?"

SB: "No, democracy becomes an obstacle."

BK: "That's what I learned when I read the book about *New Public Management*. I thought: well, they're really undoing the *demos*, all the essential pillars, the fundamental elements of a democratic society."

SB: "Democracy is slow, democracy is more expensive, democracy is messy, creates difficulties and blockages – you need to get rid of all that, you need things done fast, you need to do things efficiently, you need to do things at low cost. Those two sets of practices are just antithetical, which is again very much what Wendy Brown is saying. The one organization, within which they certainly do some work and where there are some opportunities and debate issues, is: *Education International*. It is the international organization for teacher unions, they're based in Brussels. They have something like 42 million members, because their members are based on the affiliate of unions from huge numbers of countries around the world. So, they have a world congress every couple of years. They do a lot of research and have a lot of publications focused on education reform issues."

BK: "Are you invited by them?"

SB: "Yes, and I've written a couple of things for them. They funded a study Deborah Youdell and I did on privatisations of education and we wrote a book based on that (*Hidden Privatisation*) and more recently Carolina Junneman and I wrote a piece for them about Pearson Education, (Pearson and PALF: the Mutating Giant, https://ei-ie.org/en/woe_homepage/woe_detail/4808/pearson-and-palf-the-mutating-giant), which Diane Ravitch picked up and talked about in her blog. E.I. are the one international voice which has some weight, because they speak for teachers and of course in all sorts of ways these changes operate against the interests of the teachers. So, they're worth having some kind of contact with. At the moment they're doing a little bit of work and looking at the role of philanthropists in German education, looking at things like the *Bertelsmann Stiftung*."

BK: "In Switzerland, that's the *Jakob Foundation*. This foundation shares very similar interests and pursues the same goals in Switzerland as the *Bertelsmann Stiftung* in Germany. It runs half an institute at the University of Zürich, dealing with research on the development of youngsters. Besides that, and based on that research, several day care institutions in different Swiss communities are run by them; thus the *Jakob Foundation* has a huge impact on efforts to privatize or at least influence more and more state-run institutions."

SB: "It's another significant area of influence and change. At the moment, what I'm looking at is the *Michael and Susan Dell Foundation*, which is an American philanthropic foundation. The money comes from Dell computers and they operate in the United States, South Africa and India. Their goal is, as they put it, to transform education systems and they do that to a great extent through privatization in various kinds."

BK: "There was a BBC film which I watched when I arrived in London yesterday evening about Apple, Google and their business with digital money. As you were saying about India etc., Marc Zuckerberg has now developed an obvious interest in Africa. He's gone to Kenya, with its large population, and, as a result, the idea seems to be to extend his business influence on the African Continent."

SB: "There's a whole movement across the IT sector. There's a book written by an Indian economist, C.K. Prahalad, *The Bottom of the Pyramid*. His argument is simple: He says there are billions and billions of poor people in the world, and they don't have much money. But because there are billions of them, if you put them all together, it's a huge amount of money. A number of organizations and companies like Dell, Facebook, Apple, Pearson, are working to develop markets at the bottom of the pyramid. So, they're targeting low-income, poor families with very low-cost products and services of various kinds. That's an enormous growth area, new area of profit opportunities in places like Africa, India and elsewhere."

BK: "Maybe it would be possible to have an exchange of information regularly; for we currently lack intensive communication between colleagues on the continent and those in England and the USA. I see that in many European countries the OECD has acquired an incredibly influential position; and they are increasingly going on to control and unify the different national educational systems. There has been a huge research project, mainly led in Germany, called *Transformations of the State*. Several universities in Germany contributed to the more than 150 studies done between 2001 and 2015. One was about Switzerland and the question, 'How far have international organizations, like the European Union or the OECD, been able to

influence changes and reforms in Switzerland by introducing the Bologna Reform and the PISA studies?' It is a political expert who did this study and she underlines her astonishing conclusion that, although there are so many veto players and so many political hurdles that have to be taken in Switzerland, these international organizations have been incredibly successful in implementing all their reform ideas within a very short period."

SB: "And yet, OECD has no conditional legislative power at all. It achieves its targets through the testing and the effects of position, the feedback effects on systems, and all their consultative activities. Very often, we don't know that many governments pay the OECD to write reports for them about their systems and to suggest reforms. If you look at the reports they've written about various countries – they did one on Scotland recently – they are very similar. They say repeat a set of formulaic solutions, which are: 'You need more testing, you need to change teacher training, you need different actors involved in the system to deliver services. They have no political power, but they all the same have enormous influence. In a way, that's quite fascinating and also very disturbing, because they have no democratic oversight at all. And yet there's very little media coverage of these reports. But they have an enormous impact on the civil service, on the government and on the thinking of government. It's another aspect of a technocratic de-politicizing process."

BK: "Have you had any discussions with university colleagues from of the political science or law departments? They are supposed to be the experts on the functions and foundations of democracy. They are able to explain how democracy has developed and they should be the ones to actually say: 'We're destroying democracy; we're ruining it.' There is no revolution going on openly, but it's a soft-power revolution, a slow, lenti-revolution, which will have its disastrous outcomes later. I think all sorts of intellectuals, especially experts in the field of law, should feel obliged to stand up and defend democracy by saying: 'Well, we have to think about this in public – are these developments in our educational system really something we as citizens can approve of or accept?'"

SB: "I think there really is a problem about finding spaces in which to speak. I mean, you can write blogs, I write blogs occasionally for different organizations. I wrote a paper in 2013 for *CLASS* which is a left-wing think tank (*CLASS*= Center for Labor and Social Studies), talking about democracy and education. *CLASS* is very active and a very good organization, but it finds it very difficult to break out into the mass media. There are spaces in government like the commission you mentioned. We have what we call Select Committees for almost every area in government. There's an Education Select committee. Their most recent reports - they hear evidence from experts of various kinds - was on performance and testing. Their report was quite critical of some of the effects and uses of testing, but the response of the government was basically to say they were reviewing the testing ratings and protocols. They say, appropriate changes will be made, but there's no response to the idea that there's a big problem here. They just tinker: 'We'll listen to what you're saying and make some changes.' It's very difficult to find spaces now where you're speaking to more than just very small audiences. But you have to do what you can do. It's where we are politically. I wrote a small piece about the manifestos of the major political parties in relation to the election earlier this year. The labor party manifesto talks a lot about structures and the idea of a national education system, but there wasn't one word, one sentence which said: 'This is what education is for, this is what education should be, this is what the experience of the students

should be.' It's just about how to organize the schools in different ways and having different structures."

BK: "Yes, that would be very helpful, because it sounds very familiar. In Switzerland, every Canton has a minister of education, so, actually, every Canton is responsible for its own primary schools. The Cantons then work together in an organization called *Education Departments' Conference* on the level of practical concordance. This institution has no legal power, as each minister is responsible for his own Canton, nothing more. Nevertheless, they have created a new level of decision making, as if their conference were a higher legal authority. But within their biannual conferences hardly any discussion takes place. They are advised what to think, to say and to subscribe to by their consultants, who in the end make and enforce decisions in this conference. A friend of mine is such a minister and he told me that, when he goes to one of their meetings, his secretary prepares the arguments of the agenda items for him and he studies the documents on route to the conference. However, once the conference is in progress, they don't really discuss anything. That's how the decision making works in those bodies."

SB: "One of the key experts now in these systems is the advisor. Every minister has advisors and it's a particular career now, it's a career route: 'The political advisor'. They often come from think tanks, which are very much involved now in the reform process. Again, it's a sort of a de-democratization. These are small groups who have usually a very clear political position which they then feed into government through the work of advisors and through other networks, which again have no democratic oversight or accountability. So, it's a massive change in the whole political structure and structure of government."

BK: "It's stepping backwards. It's about things which we have considered as self-evident for democracy up to now. We're going so far back. It's a shame: it's a disgrace."

SB: "Without most people noticing or even thinking about it. It's very sad, very sad."

BK: "I would very much like to thank you for this most interesting talk and all the information you have given me."

SB: "Enjoy the rest of your stay and good luck with your work of opposition! I hope you'll be able to keep going and make progress. That would be good!"