

handled the retreat from Empire and far better than we handled, say the Irish question in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Westminster Parliament is notoriously overworked. It should not be too worried about a little concentration of its energies. But there are two provisos.

First, we simply cannot afford more layers of government, or multiplications of bureaucracy. I say that as someone who, contrary to a widespread view, presides over one of the smallest in the world for its task. The Brussels Commission staff is smaller than that of the Wandsworth Borough Council in London. When a new layer is put in, an existing one should be taken out.

Second, as we introduce new and complicated frontiers of competence, I do not think we can or should avoid some measure of judicial review. Most countries get along with it very well. It may need a greater degree of political and social awareness than is at present the British judicial tradition.

YET IT WOULD BE WRONG to end on too pessimistic a note. There are undoubtedly

neglected ailments in British politics, but there is no reason to fear that the illness is terminal. The ferment of institutional argument and self-questioning, to which I referred at the beginning, may even, I believe, be a sign that we are beginning to recover. It is true, that at present, the questions are being asked more loudly and insistently outside Westminster than inside. It is also true that many party politicians—though not the outside public—are still reluctant to admit that the party system is itself a considerable cause of the other institutional ills from which we suffer, and that it is faintly ludicrous to hope to put society to rights while preserving as the one sacrosanct element every aspect of our now somewhat ossified political system. Hardly the most inspiring or convincing message for the future, if I may paraphrase slightly, would be:

*Let wealth and commerce, laws and learning die,
But leave us still our old polity*

But I am not convinced that this need be the stark choice. I have always believed in reform rather than revolution. That is wholly applicable to the political position today.

Coffee

Addiction dampens my brow.
Cups, jugs and percolators contain my life.

When friends ask more than I can give,
I give them coffee.
When my soul craves living waters,
I drink coffee.

Coffee's black depths ingrain my features,
I sit drawn to its dark brewings
Like Beardsley's diabolical women.

I sit sipping and mourning Brazil and Kenya—
Their economy depends on me.
When this consumption is interred with me,
What will the plantation workers do?

Who will manage my estate of cups?

Freda Downie

Tom Stoppard

Professional Foul

Scenes from a Television Play

SCENE THREE. Interior Anderson's hotel room.

The hotel dates back to the Czech 1950s, and so it looks rather Edwardian. The furniture is large and solid. The room contains a bed, a wardrobe, a chest, a telephone. A bathroom containing a bath leads off through a door.

Anderson is unpacking. He puts some clothes into a drawer and closes it. His suitcase is open on the bed. Anderson turns his attention to his briefcase and brings out McKendrick's magazine. He looks round wondering what to do with it. There is a knock at the door. Anderson tosses the girly magazine into his suitcase and closes the case. He goes to open the door. The caller is Pavel Hollar.

ANDERSON: Yes?

HOLLAR: I am Pavel Hollar.

ANDERSON: Yes?

HOLLAR: Professor Anderson.

Hollar is Czech and speaks with an accent.

ANDERSON: Hollar? Oh, heavens, yes. How extraordinary. Come in.

HOLLAR: Thank you. I'm sorry to—

ANDERSON: No, no—what a pleasant surprise. I've only just arrived as you can see. Sit where you can. How are you? What are you doing? You live in Prague?

HOLLAR: Oh yes.

Anderson closes the door.

ANDERSON: Well, well. Well, well, well, well. How are you? Must be ten years.

HOLLAR: Yes. It is ten. I took my degree in '67.

ANDERSON: You got a decent degree, too, didn't you?

HOLLAR: Yes, I got a first.

ANDERSON: Of course you did. Well done, well done. Are you still in philosophy?

HOLLAR: No, unfortunately.

ANDERSON: Ah. What are you doing now?

HOLLAR: I am a what do you say—a cleaner.

ANDERSON: (with intelligent interest) A cleaner? What is that?

HOLLAR: (surprised) Cleaning. Washing. With a brush and a bucket. I am a cleaner at the bus station.

ANDERSON: You wash buses?

HOLLAR: No, not buses—the lavatories, the floors where people walk and so on.

ANDERSON: Oh. I see. You're a cleaner.

HOLLAR: Yes.

Pause

ANDERSON: Are you married now, or anything?

HOLLAR: Yes. I married. She was almost my fiancée when I went to England. Irma. She is a country girl. No English. No philosophy. We have a son who is Sacha. That is Alexander.

ANDERSON: I see.

HOLLAR: And Mrs Anderson?

ANDERSON: She died. Did you meet her ever?

HOLLAR: No.

ANDERSON: (pause) I don't know what to say.