

The Federalist's Political Creed Script for a Readers' Theater

Narrator 1: Though *religious creeds* have long since been deemed quite useless, or rather indeed extremely prejudicial to the interests of virtue and true piety; yet I must at the same time be of opinion, that *political creeds* are of a very different nature, and that no government, and least of all an arbitrary one, can be supported without some such summary of its . . . articles of faith.

Narrator 2: Our late Convention, sensible of the truth of this maxim, have taken care to draw up a very full and comprehensive *creed* for the use of their creatures and expectants, who are obliged to believe and maintain every article of it, right or wrong, on pain of political damnation.

Narrator 1: And to do those slavish expectants justice, there never was on earth a set of more firm and sincere *believers*; nor any who were willing to run greater risques in defence of their political dogmas.

Narrator 2: This political creed however is no new invention: 'tis the old *tory system* revived by different hands. And the articles of it can be a secret to no one, who has the misfortune to converse with any of its advocates:

Narrator 1: But as such doctrines and maxims would better become the slave of a *Bashaw of three tails* than the subject of a free republican government, I shall just take the liberty, by way of specimen, to mention a few of these articles for the sake of your more uninformed readers.

Voice 1: They maintain that the *revolution* and the *declaration of independence*, however important at those periods, are now to be considered as mere farces, and that nothing that was then done ought to be any bar in the way of establishing the proposed system of arbitrary power.

Voice 2: That as most of the European nations are in a state of vassalage and slavery, the Americans easily may be brought to a similar situation, and therefore ought to be reduced to the same abject condition.

Voice 3: That to compass this end, a large standing army should be kept up in time of peace, under the specious pretence of guarding us against *foreign* invasions and our frontiers against the savages; but in reality to overawe and enslave the people, who, if provoked at the violation of their rights, should at any time dare to murmur or complain, the military should be employed to *bayonet* them for their arrogance and presumption.

Voice 4: That to say the late convention was not authorised by the people at large to form an *aristocratic, consolidated* system of government for them, but merely to recommend alterations and amendments of the good old articles of confederation, is downright treason and rebellion.

Voice 5: That to assert that it was a shameful departure from the principles of the

revolution and republicanism, and a base violation of the trust reposed in them, is a crime of the deepest dye, and never to be forgiven.

Voice 6: That if any man in the course of his writings should happen to give offence . . . the author can be extorted or discovered . . . to the utmost rigor of the law . . .

Voice 7: That the trial by jury, whether in *civil* or *criminal* cases, ought to be entirely abolished, and that the judges only of the new federal court, appointed by the *well born* in the ten-mile-square, should determine all matters of controversy between individuals.

Voice 1: That the trial by jury ought likewise to be abolished in the case of libels, and every one accused of writing or even publishing a libel, ought to be tried by *informations, attachments, interrogatories*, and the other arbitrary methods practised in the court of *star-chamber*.

Voice 2: That a libel is whatever may happen to give offence to any great man, or old woman; and the more true the charge, the more virulent the libel.

Voice 3: That an unrestrained liberty of the press should be granted to those who write and publish against the liberties of the people, but be absolutely denied to such as write against unconstitutional measures, and the abominable strides of arbitrary power, which have recently been attempted by any of the rump conclaves or conventions.

Voice 4: That the people indeed have no rights and privileges but what they enjoy at the mercy of the rich lordlings, who may, of right, deprive them of any or of all their liberties whenever they think proper.

Voice 5: That the freemen of America have no right to think for themselves, nor to chuse their own officers of government, who ought to be named and appointed by the *king elect*, the *half king* and the *senate*; these being evidently much better judges of what is for the good of the people than the people themselves.

Voice 6: That a *bill of rights* and other explicit declarations in favor of the people, are old musty things, and ought to be destroyed; and that for any set of men to declare themselves in favor of a bill of rights, is a most daring insult offered to General *Washington* and Doctor *Franklin*, who, it must be allowed by the whole world, are absolutely *infallible*.

Voice 7: That those men are best qualified to conduct the affairs of a free people, who breathe nothing but a spirit of tyranny, and who, by their violent, illegal, and unconstitutional . . . procedures, have well nigh reduced the good people of this great continent to the very eve of a civil war . . .

Voice 1: . . . And that as soon as *nine* states

Voice 2: . . . should accede to the new system of slavery . . .

Voice 3: . . . every one who would presume to lisp a syllable against it . . .

Voice 4: . . . ought to be taken up . . .

Voice 5: . . . imprisoned, and punished . . .

Voice 6: . . . at the discretion of . . .

Voice 7: . . . the judges of the supreme federal court.

Narrator 1: Such are a few of the many articles of the *political creed* of the *federal backs* . . .

Narrator 2: . . . and how firmly they believe and diligently act up to them, is a matter of equal notoriety and grief to every real patriot in America.