Trump’s Rocky Relationship with the Mormon Axis

At the conclusion of the impeachment trial, the vote was taken, and all Republicans voted in unison to keep Trump in office. There was however, one notable exception. US Senator Mitt Romney was the single Republican to vote to convict Trump on charges of abuse of power.

The media has chalked this up to merely a personal tension between the two men. The reality is, however, that in his longstanding tension with Trump, Mitt Romney represents more than himself. Romney, as a US Senator from Utah, represents the Mormon Axis. This is a center of power within the US government apparatus that leans conservative but very much has its own agenda, competing with other forces within the Republican Party, as well as within the FBI and CIA.

A Modern Day Mystery Cult

In Ancient Rome, the official state religion included worship of mythological deities, such as Jupiter, Mars, and Saturn. After the fall of the Roman Republic, the state religion also incorporated the belief in the divinity of the Emperor as God in human form assigned to rule over all the world.

However, throughout the history of the Roman Empire, “mystery cults” continued to emerge, and at various times became deeply influential. These religious sects did not deny the existence of Rome’s official Gods, but had a specific deity that they held above others. Adherents of the Mystery Cults had a very specific set of beliefs, lived according to a specific set of rules, and centered their lives around a particular deity. The cult of Isis, for example, worshipped a goddess from the Egyptian tradition. The cult of Mithras was a Roman re-interpretation of the ancient Persian prophet Zarathustra.

These sects were referred to as “Mystery Cults” or sometimes simply as “Mysteries” because their beliefs were not a matter of public record, and were not available to non-believers. Members of such cults were called “initiates” and after undergoing certain rituals and becoming members, they became privy to information about the group’s beliefs and practices. The cult of Mithras had seven layers of initiation, with full knowledge of Mithriac beliefs only reserved for a layer of the most trusted adherents.

The Church of Latter Day Saints (LDS), commonly called “The Mormons” in US vernacular, functions as a powerful “Mystery Cult” within US society. While Mormon missionaries knock on doors throughout America proselytizing their faith, they are very reluctant to have open conversations about theology. Recruitment is conducted on the basis of presenting LDS as a friendly, happy community with prominent and influential members. The beliefs and concepts of Mormonism, though widely public on the internet, are considered to be internal and not for discussion with non-believers. This has been especially true after TV programs, like South Park, and Broadway musicals like “The Book of Mormon” subjected LDS theology to emphatic ridicule.

Mormonism began in 1820 when a treasure hunter and alcoholic named Joseph Smith claimed to have a vision in the US State of New York. In his vision, Smith reported that he was made aware that he was a prophet and informed instructed that all existing Christian churches were false. Eventually, Smith claimed to have been visited by Angels, and presented with a book of golden plates, and giving testimony of events that took place on the continent of North America prior to European settlement. Mormonism preaches that Native Americans are actually a lost tribe of ancient Jews, and that Christ visited what is now the United States centuries ago.
In its early years, one of the principal beliefs of the Latter Days Saints Movement was that polygamy was an acceptable practice. As a result, LDS adherents were constantly forced to move further westward, as its members frequently faced legal consequences for violating US marriage laws. The founder, Joseph Smith was killed by a hostile mob in 1844, but the faith continued, moving further westward and eventually establishing Salt Lake City, Utah as its headquarters.

As Utah became a US territory, tensions with Washington DC were frequent. Federal troops were often stationed in Utah, and many Mormons were jailed for polygamy. In 1890, the LDS church officially abandoned polygamy. Utah was ultimately granted statehood in 1896.

Mormonism existed as a kind of fringe religion in US society, but began to greatly expand during the Cold War. Starting in the 1950s, Mormons emphasized the centrality of the United States in their theology, and joined Anti-Communist organizations such as the John Birch Society. As a result of their alliance with the Republican Party and anti-communism, LDS adherents became increasingly accepted and respected in conservative circles.

Much like the Isis and Mithra worshippers of ancient Rome, becoming a full Mormon in contemporary America requires a lengthy process of initiation. When becoming a church member, Mormons participate in complex rituals and are even given special undergarments. Each Mormon is required to do a lengthy assignment of mission work in early adulthood, typically 2 years for males and 18 months for females.

“As Close To You As Your Telephone”

The US Department of Justice is a longstanding institution within the executive branch of the Federal Government. Many wrongfully assume that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is merely an essential division of the Justice Department, doing investigative and police work at a federal level. This assumption is incorrect.

The US Department of Justice had its Bureau of Investigation in 1908, and its National Bureau of Criminal Identification even earlier. What is now the FBI was created specifically as a dominion of J. Edgar Hoover.

Hoover had been a congressional librarian, and at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, he had become the resident expert on Communism in Washington DC. The fiery anti-communist orator, who lectured members of congress about “The Red Menace” eventually was eventually hired by the Department of Justice to conduct its “Palmer Raids” against foreign born radicals. In 1924, Hoover was appointed as the director of the Bureau of Investigation, the first incarnation of the modern FBI.

Anti-communism was the FBI’s primary focus, and the organization often functioned as a kind of personality cult around J. Edgar Hoover. The FBI went after notorious bank robbers and organized crime during the 1930s and worked hard to raise its own notoriety. Comic books and radio programs sponsored by the FBI portrayed Hoover as an action hero. Hoover gave radio speeches to the US public, and learning to love his personality was central to the training of new agents. Hoover popularized the phrase “The FBI is as close to you as your telephone,” in the 1950s, urging Americans to report any Communist or potentially subversive activities.

Mormons Go To Washington

Writer Steven Weitzman from of the University of Pennsylvania describes the FBI’s relationship with religious organizations in an interview with The Atlantic saying: “The FBI has been a major player in shaping the religious landscape of the United States. It did so by lending its support to certain religious leaders, by introducing its own religious rhetoric into the broader culture, and by harassing or delegitimizing religious actors who were deemed to be threatening or subversive in some way. The religious ideology of a group like the Mormons-, who came to embrace the United States as almost a religious virtue—that needs to be understood in the larger context of Mormon history. Mormons were subject to persecution by the federal government in the 19th century, so their attitude toward the government has to be understood as part of a larger struggle for survival.”

Though Mormons had presence in the FBI from its earliest days, in the 1970s after Hoover’s death, their influence greatly expanded within the bureau. The FBI currently had a recruitment program specifically for LDS members. According to Business Insider:

“Mormon missionaries are valued for their foreign language skills, abstinence from drugs and alcohol, and respect for authority.”
In the 1970s, the Mormons also became very prominent within the CIA. An article from Atlas Obscura cites a report on the CIA: “One 1975 report on the CIA, for instance, included the tidbit that one Mormon-owned PR firm made some “overseas offices available...as cover for Agency employees operating abroad.”

As Mormons collected data for the CIA, and helped provide cover for agents operating abroad, their international missionary work also grew greatly expanded. The religious sect expanded far beyond Utah, with new converts across the world.

While evangelical and fundamentalist Christianity is popular in the Midwest and south, it is in western states like Idaho, Arizona, and Washington that Mormonism has had a geographic concentration. Mormons have worked hard to maintain influence within the Boy Scouts of America and other community groups within their regions of strength. Often the evangelical Christian right has aligned with Mormons to oppose homosexuality and abortion, but overall the two groupings have completely contrary worldviews. Though the Mormons are the top religion among FBI and CIA agents, it is mainstream Christianity’s unwavering belief that Mormons they are heretics and cultists. has not changed.

Salt Lake City Disapproves of Trump

As Donald Trump moved toward becoming the Republican nominee in 2016, the Mormon wing of the Republican Party was not quiet about disliking Trump. Mitt Romney gave a press conference urging all Republicans to do anything possible to stop him, saying “Trump is fraud.”

In Utah, former CIA officer Evan McMullen, a prominent figure in the LDS Church, was placed on the state ballot as a Presidential candidate. Conservative commentator Glenn Beck, formerly a former national TV host and himself a Mormon convert, announced himself as a “Never Trumper” as well, and urged Republicans not to vote for Trump at the polls.

However, right before the elections in November of 2016, Evan McMullen’s supporters backed away from him, and the majority of Mormons in Utah ended up voting for Trump. Around the same time, FBI director James Comey held a press conference announcing that the investigation into Hillary Clinton’s emails was being reopened. Many blamed Comey’s actions for helping Trump to be victorious.

Furthermore, a few months into Trump’s presidency, Glenn Beck changed his tune, and announced that he had come around to supporting the President.

However, Trump fired FBI director, James Comey, in May of 2017, causing many voices associated with the FBI to declare Trump to be disrespecting the agency’s autonomy.

Romney’s decision to cast his vote in favor of removing Trump seems to indicate that the tensions between US President Donald Trump, and a powerful faction within the US intelligence apparatus are still ongoing. Romney openly declared that his LDS faith was essential in his decision. The Atlantic reported, after speaking with him: “Romney, a devout member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, described to me the power of taking an oath before God: “It’s something which I take very seriously.” Throughout the trial, he said, he was guided by his father’s favorite verse of Mormon scripture: Search diligently, pray always, and be believing, and all things shall work together for your good. “I have gone through a process of very thorough analysis and searching, and I have prayed through this process,” he told me. “But I don’t pretend that God told me what to do.” In the end, the evidence was inescapable. “The president did in fact pressure a foreign government to corrupt our election process,” Romney said. “And really, corrupting an election process in a democratic republic is about as abusive and egregious an act against the Constitution—and one's oath—that I can imagine. It's what autocrats do.”

Interestingly, in December, leaks about massive tax fraud facilitated by the LDS Church leadership found their way to America’s front pages. in December. Furthermore, the embarrassing revelation that Romney had set up an alias twitter account in order to praise himself also found its way to the headlines.

It's very clear that the political influence and power centered around Salt Lake City has a very uncomfortable relationship with the commander-in-chief. A kind of back room conflict is taking place, not between political parties or even between deep state entities, but between the LDS faction and its rivals.

It will be hard to predict how exactly this plays out, especially as the 2020 elections get closer.

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