

The Significance and Path of Mass Line Practice for the Construction of Civil Society in the Network Era

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ABSTRACT

It is the general trend to construct a mature civil society in today's society. Through the innovative practice of mass line in the network era, it helps to guide citizens' rational participation and build mature modern citizens; it helps to protect citizens' democratic rights and interests and further stimulate the vitality of citizens and social organizations; it helps to prevent the trap of civil society construction in the network era and improve the theory of civil society construction. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen network management, innovate network practice methods of mass line, realize the combination of online and offline mass line, and boost the construction of civil society.

Keywords: the network era, mass line, civil society, construction

1. INTRODUCTION

In Marx's view, between the state and society, there will be a historical process in which the state originates from the society, the state breaks away from and controls the society, the society gets rid of the state control, and the state returns to the society. According to this point of view, it is the general trend to construct a mature and developed civil society in the long process of mankind's arrival at the Communist society and the country's demise. With the development of science and technology and the rise of economy, the number of Internet users in China has been gradually restored to the total population structure. As one of the basic characteristics of this era, the Internet has a profound impact on social politics, economy, military, culture, life and other aspects, as well as the construction of civil society. However, the network is like a double-edged sword, which has both advantages and disadvantages on the construction of civil society. Therefore, it is particularly important to actively explore the methods and models of building a mature and healthy civil society. The mass line is one of the three magic weapons of the Communist Party of China in the revolutionary era, and it is also the most fundamental organizational line and work line for the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era. The party's mass line requires that the party's work "all for the masses, everything depends on the masses" and "come from the masses and go to the masses". [1] This mass is a large number of netizens close to the total population in China today. In a sense, the construction of civil society relies on the huge number of Internet users: as the basic cell of civil society, citizens (netizens) are the practice

subjects in the construction of civil society; the construction process of civil society is the process of constantly innovating and practicing the party's mass line, stimulating the vitality of citizens (netizens), and organizing the broad masses of people (netizens) based on the people. The construction process of civil society is also the process of serving oneself and solving one's own problems. Therefore, the concept of building a civil society in the network era is essentially the same as the practice of the party's mass line, and the process of building a civil society is the practice of the mass line. Through the network innovation practice of the mass line, we can effectively eliminate the negative effects of the network and promote the construction of civil society.

2. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MASS LINE PRACTICE IN PROMOTING THE CONSTRUCTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE NETWORK ERA

2.1. It is helpful to guide citizens' rational participation and build mature modern citizens

With the advent of the Internet era, on the one hand, it provides citizens with more and broader new ways of political participation, arouses citizens' awareness of political participation, greatly improves citizens' participation in social and political issues, and also

provides new effective tools for citizens to supervise government power, making the public issues of Online public opinion transforming into social and political issues. On the other hand, the characteristics of freedom, anonymity and rapid diffusion of Internet new media make the incubation period of online public opinion constantly shortened and the convergence speed of opinions accelerated. Once some low-quality citizens release some false news, false political information and extreme remarks from western media on the Internet due to digital divide, interest driven, western political intervention and other factors, it is easy to incite the public's bad mood in a very short time, destroy the citizens' political identity to the party and government, cause the citizens' ideological confusion, and then lead to mass incidents. It has a significant negative impact on the whole society. In 2016, General Secretary Xi Jinping investigated the people's daily, Xinhua news agency, CCTV and other central media, and presided over the party's Forum on news and public opinion symposium. He pointed out: "at present, there are two public opinion fields. The official public opinion field and the folk public opinion field even split abnormally at one time. The reason is that the discourse world of our communication institutions and the individual experience world of ordinary people have deviation, even very serious opposition. If this continues, the ruling legitimacy will be dispelled, and the party and the country will be shaken." On the surface, there is a deviation between the discourse world of official communication agencies and the individual experience world of netizens, in fact, the essence is that the government departments fail to implement the party's mass line and grasp and respond to the social and political issues of great concern to the masses. For some people's negative or rash irrational speech, the government departments did not wait carefully, nor did they guide in time. "Netizens come from the common people. When the common people go online, the public opinion is also on the Internet."^[2] The public opinion on the Internet is ignored by government departments, resulting in all kinds of private rumors and official rumors becoming sharp weapons that seriously damage the credibility of the government and seriously erode the foundation of socialist China. Therefore, in order to construct a civil society in the Internet age, the party and the government must further improve the traditional mass line mode, make full use of the convenience of the network, innovate the practice methods of the mass line under the network conditions, pay close attention to the hot social and political topics of the masses and their development and changes in real time, timely interpret negative news and guide the irrational speech of network citizens, promote citizens to enhance their civic awareness and become more rational and mature when they participate in social governance. Only through the active guidance of the government and the practice of civil society, can we cultivate modern

citizens with modern consciousness, and make them have the capital and skills to participate in social governance at a more rational, higher level and on a larger scale, so as to construct a mature and healthy civil society.

2.2. It will help to protect the democratic rights and interests of citizens and further stimulate the vitality of citizens and social organizations

The most terrible enemy of democratic politics is the political indifference of citizens. The reasons for people's political indifference are complex. One of the important factors is that people's interests and rights have not been effectively protected, resulting in their dissatisfaction and distrust of the government and society, lack of enthusiasm for politics, and lack of sense of responsibility and mission for social affairs. The report of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China put forward that "we should expand citizens' Orderly Political Participation from all levels and fields, and realize the rule of law in all work of the country."^[3] To expand citizens' orderly participation, it is necessary to protect citizens' rights and safeguard their vital interests, so as to stimulate the vitality of political participation of citizens and social organizations. The party and government departments at all levels should be good at making use of the Internet, actively carry out mass line practice activities through new mass line practice methods such as network politics inquiry, network hotline, network connection, network evaluation, network report and feedback, and online mailbox, so as to find and solve the ideological and practical problems concerned by the masses in a timely and effective manner, so as to reshape the image of the party and the government. We should protect the interests of the masses, eliminate all kinds of rumors, protect the democratic rights of citizens, make citizens identify with their own masters, and devote themselves to the practice of social governance with a more active attitude, so as to promote the construction of a healthy and mature civil society. As Terry diamond said, a vibrant civil society not only improves the capacity of democratic politics to be responsible, but also enhances the representativeness and vitality of democratic politics.^[4] I believe that through the innovative practice of the mass line in the network era and stimulating the enthusiasm and vitality of citizens and social organizations in political participation, we will further improve socialist democratic politics with Chinese characteristics and provide a successful Chinese democratic paradigm for the development of the international community and future society.

2.3. It is helpful to prevent the trap of civil society construction in the network era and improve the theory of civil society construction

After the reform and opening up, some social organizations have risen quietly and opened up the process of civil society construction in China. This proves that the civil society practice based on citizens' spontaneous participation is an original event rather than the result of external intervention. However, some scholars ignore the fact of self-demand and spontaneous construction, and examine the construction of China's civil society under the western democratic political paradigm, and simply emphasize the independence and rights of citizens. In the network era when the West controls the right of network discourse and everyone is we media, it is easy to produce "civil society trap": first, ignoring the leadership and guidance of the party, as a result, the leading position of the party's leadership and mainstream ideology has been seriously weakened, pan-liberalism and anarchism have been rampant. Many social organizations have even been used by foreign forces and people with ulterior motives, which will ultimately endanger the people's dominant position as the master of the country. Second, ignoring the rule of law and taking charity for some illegal organizations and a few people who seek private interests by cheating social capital opens the door for convenience, which not only tramples on the social conscience, but also weakens the public trust of social organizations for a time. At the second Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee, General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed that we should give full play to the role of social forces in the management of social affairs, and at the same time, we should strengthen the regulation and guidance of various social organizations. The "plan for institutional reform and functional transformation of the State Council" adopted by the plenary session clearly defines the arrangements for the reform of the management system of social organizations, and puts forward the principles of actively guiding development and strictly managing according to law, so as to promote the healthy and orderly development of social organizations participating in social governance. Therefore, only by strengthening the party's leadership and the construction of the rule of law can we effectively prevent the "civil society trap". So the party and the government must actively explore the new methods of mass line practice in the network era, strengthen the party's leadership over social organizations and civil organizations, formulate laws and regulations to standardize the construction of civil society, and ensure the healthy development of civil society. Only in this way can the party and government obtain more political identity and develop

civil society theory suitable for China's national conditions.

3. THE EFFECTIVE PATH OF PROMOTING THE CONSTRUCTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY BY THE PRACTICE OF MASS LINE IN THE NETWORK ERA

3.1. Strengthen network management and provide a safe and effective platform for citizens' network participation

In the Internet age, people can not only capture the latest trends and policies of the party and the government through the information and data obtained through the Internet, but also express their own opinions and demands by logging in to the government portal, we media client, community forum, and online reporting suggestions. This convenient, efficient, low threshold, low-cost way of modern network participation in politics, on the one hand, greatly expands the scope of the party and government to collect social information, public opinion and public demand, on the other hand, it is easy to produce the phenomenon of management out of control. Cyberspace has a clear sky and good ecology, which is in line with the interests of the people, can effectively build consensus and build a mature and healthy civil society; if the cyberspace is polluted and ecological deterioration, it will damage the interests of the people and do harm to the construction of civil society. So we must strengthen network management. To strengthen network management is not to restrict freedom of speech, not to return China to the era when there was only one voice, but to standardize network governance and provide a safe and effective platform for citizens to participate in political affairs through Internet. Therefore, we must do the following three points: first, strengthen the construction of the network legal system, regulate the network political participation behavior; second, crack down on the network illegal and criminal behavior, eliminate the network anti mainstream ideological speech, and purify the network air; thirdly, widely open the network participation platform, and timely sort out and analyze the network participation situation. In any case, the party and government are required to proceed from the reality of the masses, take the interests and needs of the masses as the starting point, truly implement the mass line, form scientific decision-making and take scientific measures.

3.2. Explore the new method of mass line practice in the network era and improve the party's ruling ability

In the Internet age, cyberspace is the spiritual home of hundreds of millions of people. So leading the construction of civil society in the network age is a great challenge to the ruling ability of our party. The fundamental way to deal with the challenge is to promote the party's mass line, keep pace with the times and innovate the network mass line. In 2016, when Xi Jinping hosted the Forum on network security and information work, he put forward the concept of "mass line of the Internet", and called for "party and government organs and leading cadres at all levels to learn to take the mass line through the Internet, to surf the Internet regularly, to dive, chat and make noises, to understand the wishes of the masses, to collect good ideas and suggestions, and to respond positively to netizens' concerns, doubts and confusion." [5] To carry out the network mass line, it is required to achieve the following: first, improve the service consciousness and ability level of leading cadres to serve the people by using network technology, effectively gather social consensus and improve government efficiency. Leading cadres and government departments should actively develop the network service platform, simplify the cumbersome, let residents and enterprises run errands less, handle affairs easily and do not add congestion, solve the problems of enterprises and the masses in handling affairs, and effectively overcome bureaucratic habits; at the same time, they should be good at using network technology, especially big data, to analyze various public opinions and public demands, so as to form a decision-making mechanism that deeply understands the people's conditions, fully reflects public opinion, and widely concentrates the wisdom of the people, promotes scientific and democratic decision-making, and improves the level and efficiency of decision-making. Second, build a smooth communication channel between the party and the masses, and realize data sharing among departments. A sound communication mechanism between the party and the masses has the characteristics of comprehensive, timely, accurate, two-way and interactive. The rapid development of network technology has created necessary material conditions for a sound communication mechanism between the party and the masses. However, the current construction of the party masses communication platform needs to be improved (for example, the president's mailbox of a university cannot be opened). The lack of overall planning and lack of communication and cooperation will not only cause a huge waste of human, financial and network resources, but also affect the government's data and information sharing, and easily damage the enthusiasm of the masses and cause dissatisfaction among the masses. With the active practice of our

party's network mass line, the party's ruling ability is bound to be greatly improved.

3.3. The practice of mass line is closely combined online and offline to boost the construction of civil society

The healthy construction of civil society in the network age is not only based on the innovation and practice of the party's mass line based on the network, but also on the traditional mass line practice activities such as home visits and field investigation carried out in the actual life and work of the masses. Only by combining online practice with offline practice of the mass line, "concentric circles must be formed between online and offline", [6] can we boost the healthy growth of civil society.

Some scholars have pointed out that no matter the size and structure of Internet users, they cannot completely represent the mass groups in real life. Therefore, the expression of public opinion on the Internet can only represent the real wishes of some groups, which determines that the public opinion on the Internet can only represent the public opinion of a part of the population, and its information has certain limitations, which determines its impact on public decision-making is also limited. Although there are a large number of Internet citizens in China, they do not cover the total population; even among the Internet users, some of them are not good at using the Internet to express their demands well; the imbalance of economic and social development leads to the absence of network participation in some regions. All these determine that the online practice of the mass line can not gather the greatest social consensus and fully reflect the public sentiment and public opinion. It must be solved by carrying out offline mass line practice activities. At the same time, leading cadres go deep into the people's life, personally observe the people's conditions, and have zero distance contact with the masses. This mass sentiment and the shock brought to the masses are irreplaceable by modern network technology.

4. CONCLUSION

It is a long-term and arduous task to innovate the practice mode of mass line through network platform and network technology, continuously promote scientific decision-making, help the healthy growth of civil society and develop the theory of socialist civil society with Chinese characteristics, which can only be realized through the relay and struggle of generations.

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