

Turkey's General Election in 1950 and the Cognition of British Diplomats

-- Investigation based on the Documents Written by Charles, British Ambassador to Turkey

Kairen Zhou^{1, a}

¹School of History and Civilization, Shannxi Normal University, Xi'an, China

^adelphispringsummer@163.com

Abstract

The election of the Grand National Assembly in 1950 was an important watershed in the modern political history of Turkey, which marked a profound change in the political level in the process of Turkey's modernization and was a milestone on the road of Turkey's political democratization. On the one hand, the new atmosphere presented in this election not only reflects the practical results of the long-term top-down political reform of the President of the Republic of Turkey, the ruling government, and other political parties but also shows that the Republican People's Party and the Democratic Party are striving for the support of western countries for Turkey's westernization under the background of the Cold War. On the other hand, this election started the political practice of "the real structuring upwards" put forward by Kemal, and its essence was the profound change in Turkish political culture, that is, the competitive election system created space for people's legitimate political participation. The clever campaign skills of the Democratic Party broke the long-standing relationship between farmers and the state, and the majority of farmers came to the center of the Turkish political arena with a more positive attitude.

Keywords

Turkey's general election in 1950; Noel Charles; Political culture.

1. Introduction

As a democratic country with a high degree of secularization in the Islamic world, there is a high research value on Turkey's democratic politics. After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the authoritarian system with a high concentration of power gradually matured, and the one-party system and the political structure of the unity of party and government have become the logical extension of the authoritarian system in the Kemal era [17]. Under this kind of political ecology, parliamentary elections become a mere formality, and public legal political participation lacks the necessary space. The period from the beginning of the multi-party system cycle in 1945 to the establishment of the Second Republic of Turkey in 1961 was the initial stage of democracy in Turkey.

Although the general election in July 1946 was the first parliamentary election in the history of the Republic of Turkey in which both the ruling party and the opposition party participated, the election procedure still had obvious flaws and the election results lacked fairness. In March 1950, a new electoral law approved by various parties was passed in parliament. It stipulated that the judicial organs should supervise the elections, and established the principle of secret voting and public counting, thus avoiding the interference of citizens in exercising their right to vote. All parties then launched a series of election campaigns to compete for voters. The general

election on May 14th, 1950 was held under the above background, which became an important watershed in the modern political history of Turkey. Many new events were presented in this election, such as the orderly election environment, the fair and open election process, and wider political participation of the Turkish people. This not only reflects the practical results of the long-term top-down political reform of the President of the Republic of Turkey, the ruling government, and other political parties but also means the official opening of the political practice of “the real structuring upwards” [9] first proposed by Kemal in 1919.

The diplomatic document written by Noel H. H. Charles [7], British Ambassador to Turkey in 1950 provided the perspective of British diplomats on Turkey’s general election in 1950. This paper tries to evaluate Charles’ cognition of this election from his standpoint and the reasons for his misjudgment of farmers’ votes, so as to have a deeper understanding of the milestone significance of this election in Turkey’s political democratization.

2. The Standpoint of Charles’ Argument

2.1. The Performance of Charles’ Standpoint in his Diplomatic Documents

First of all, when analyzing Turkey’s diplomatic situation before the general election, Charles repeatedly emphasized the closeness of the Turkish Republican People’s Party government to the West (especially Britain) and the deterioration of Turkey-Soviet relations. In two documents dated January 4th, 1950, Charles reported on Turkey’s domestic and foreign affairs in 1949. He believes that Turkey’s foreign policy in 1949 was rooted in two feelings, that is, “the feeling of isolation and imminent danger” [6]. “The sense of imminent danger” originated from the deterioration of relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union and its satellite countries after World War II. The Soviet Union did not forgive Turkey’s “infidelity” in the course of World War II, so it declared the Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality between Turkey and the Soviet Union null and void, and made a series of territorial claims to Turkey against the Daniil Strait and Armenia in 1945 [5]. By 1949, Turkey and the Soviet Union had stopped covering up their de facto hostility, and Ulus, a semi-official newspaper in Turkey, responded flexibly to Moscow’s propaganda campaign [6]. Although Turkey and Soviet satellite countries maintained a fragile balance between political hostility and commercial mutual benefit, President Inonu used the word “bad” to describe Turkey’s relations with Soviet satellite countries in the parliament in November 1949 and declared that Turkey’s efforts to improve their relations were rejected by the other side [6]. In this situation, Turkey would naturally try to seek reliable protection from the West, so as to obtain the support of western countries and deal with the possible future aggression of the Soviet Union. Although the western countries pledged to maintain Turkey’s status when they signed the North Atlantic Treaty, Turkey was always excluded from North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and failed to become a founding member of the Council of Europe, which aggravated Turkey’s sense of isolation. However, Charles also pointed out that the help of Britain and the United States gave comfort to Turkey. Britain cooperated closely with Turkey, and its years of guidance laid the foundation for the modernization of the Turkish army.

Driven by the United States, the Turkish armed forces started a slow but steady modernization process [6]. In addition, it is noteworthy that Charles intended to compare the relationship between Turkey and the United States with that between Turkey and Britain in his discourse, and he tended to “suppress America and promote Britain” when expounding the contributions of the two countries to Turkey’s modernization. Experts from the United States in finance, industry, agriculture, etc. visited Turkey one after another, and diplomatic representatives from the U.S. Navy and Middle Eastern countries met in Istanbul. These diplomatic events that took place in 1949 all showed that Turkey-U.S. relations were becoming closer and closer. However,

Charles proposed that although Turkey was grateful for the assistance from the United States, there was no deep friendship between Turkey and the United States until now (January 1950). Compared with the United States, Turkey still trusted Britain more than the United States. On the one hand, Turks thought that Britain was more deeply involved in Turkish affairs and was more familiar with the actual situation in Turkey and the Middle East. On the other hand, it was because Turkey's foreign policy was guided by its territorial security. Only when the United States could provide reliable guarantees for its territorial security would Turkey maintain its loyalty to the United States [5]. In the document written to Ernest Bevin [10] on March 1st, 1950, Charles further evaluated the actual effect of the Marshall Plan. On January 13th, 1950, Time published an article written by Manfred, the correspondent of the magazine in Istanbul, which described the role of the Marshall Plan in helping to solve some social and agricultural problems in modern Turkey. Charles pointed out that Manfred's article was too optimistic, which was easy to mislead readers who do not know much about the actual situation in the Near East and the Middle East. "People always expect too much. They feel that through several years of more enlightened management, and the assistance of millions of dollars worth of American products, the lifestyle of a nation with a long history will be completely changed" [2]. "It is too early to expect too much of the practical help that the Marshall Plan can bring to Turkey, or it is also too early even to predict whether Turkey has the ability to make rational use of the Marshall Plan" [2].

Secondly, no matter before, during, or after the election, Charles always insisted that despite the differences in specific policy propositions between the Turkish Republican People's Party and the Democratic Party, the two parties were consistent in adhering to Kemal's westernization road, which was embodied as political democratization and secularism in internal affairs. However, before and during the general election, this consistency is largely a gesture made by the two parties competing for the support of Western countries. Here is just one example. On April 12th, 1950, the funeral of Fevzi Çakmak, honorary chairman of the National Party triggered an unprecedented demonstration, only one month after the general election officially started. Turkey's Republican People's Party government seriously misjudged the power of people's sentiments, and was in a passive position in dealing with this turmoil, because it could not find evidence that the demonstrations were instigated by dangerous elements, nor could it directly resort to repression. Under this circumstance, when meeting Charles, Inonu said: "The Republican People's Party will strive to ensure the smooth progress of the general election. No matter which party wins in the end, it will pursue 'the truest form of democracy'. Even if the Republican People's Party loses in this election, it will fully cooperate with the new ruling party, so that the government can continue to operate and realize the best interests of the country".

Charles believed that for Inonu, a figure who has actually been in charge of Turkey for 12 years, this is a remarkable statement, which implies the meaning of "sticking to Kemal's reformative path", "doing everything possible to minimize the negative impact of this turmoil" and "ensuring the smooth progress of the general election". It makes Charles unable to judge for a moment whether the demonstration at Marshal Cakmak's funeral seriously damaged the future of the current government [1]. The Democratic Party's position may be more interesting. After the demonstration, "Bayar expressed support for (the government of the Republican People's Party) to resist any attempt to weaken Kemal's cause" [3]. But "privately, the Democratic Party is worried that the signs of opposition and dissatisfaction (in demonstrations) will make the Republican People's Party government so alert that it is less inclined to free elections than in the past" [3]. It can be seen that although the Republican People's Party and the Democratic Party adhered to Kemal's secularism and the principle of separation of church and state in dealing with sudden turmoil, showing some consistency, the real motives of both parties were closely related to the imminent general election. The government of the Republican People's

Party did not want the social disorder caused by the demonstration at Marshal Cakmak's funeral to become a tool for opposition forces to attack the Republican People's Party, so it tried its best to eliminate the negative impact of this turmoil on the general election from public opinion. The Democratic Party tried to ensure that "the new electoral law is correctly applied" [3] and safeguard the hard-won principle of free elections. Therefore, it publicly condemned the demonstrations and expressed its willingness to stick to Kemal's cause together with the Republican People's Party. The gesture of mutual support and cooperation between the two parties was not only shown to the Turkish people, but also to the western countries. Charles was keenly aware of this. He stated in the document on May, 8th, 1950 that at the recent reception hosted by the British Embassy in Turkey for the commander-in-chief of the Middle East Army, Copulu, one of the most outstanding leaders of the Democratic Party, reluctantly put his arms around the shoulders of the British Secretary of State. This was "straws in the winds", which typically showed that the Democratic Party was striving for a more favorable position in the general election [1]. This analysis path is also applicable to the general election process. As mentioned in the first section of this paper, many new features in Turkey's general election in 1950 largely benefited from the measures taken by the Republican People's Party government and political parties to overcome the difficulties. Leaders of both parties have effectively managed and controlled the voting process. "The thoroughness of the election process is a remarkable sign of Turkey's progress in democratic thought and practice" [4]. Charles pointed out that the reason why Inonu did not manipulate the election artificially was that he realized that the people have regarded the right to vote freely as a due right, and on the other hand, he tried to create an election atmosphere with strict procedures and democracy, so as to make this election a "model of correctitude". He hoped that this election would give reassurance to all western countries that support Turkey to become a true democracy [4].

Finally, in these letters, Charles repeatedly mentioned that communists were hiding in Turkey, which reflected his concern and vigilance about the infiltration of Soviet communism into Turkey. At the same time, we can also read from the details that he has confidence in the Turkish adherence to the road of westernization. For example, when analyzing the causes of the unrest at Marshal Cakmak's funeral, Charles said that it was hard for him to believe that the single factor of "respect for the dead Marshal" was enough to gather such a large crowd in the street. Therefore, there is little doubt that the demonstrations were mainly encouraged by forces hostile to the current Turkish government, including the Turks who were dissatisfied with the high prices in Istanbul and the Nationalist Party whose important program was "opposing the secularization principle of Kemal and returning to the old Muslim laws and lifestyles". "More likely, the Nationalist Party 'harbor' communist factors". "It is said that among those who were arrested (including some non-Muslim Armenians), communists can be found." [3] However, Charles pointed out that "under similar circumstances, a person whose attitude is not as firm as that of the Turks and who is unaware of the threat from the Soviet Union may have an obvious reaction to communism" [4]. But the Turks have the ability to avoid this risk, and the great defeat of the Nationalist Party in the 1950 general election was "a gift from Turkish innate good sense of the Turks in eschewing extremes" [4]. In other words, Charles believed that Kemal's secularism (westernization) road is a middle and safe one. As long as the Turkish government and people hold an unswerving attitude towards it, on the one hand, they can avoid blind exclusion due to nationalist sentiment and religious complex, and on the other hand, they can avoid state capitalism being gradually interfered, and controlled by the Soviet Union.

2.2. Evaluating Charles' Standpoint

As the British ambassador to Turkey, it is Charles' duty to uphold the position of the British Foreign Office when writing diplomatic letters. The position of the British Foreign Office is

based on the judgment of the international environment and is determined by the national interests of the United Kingdom.

During the four years from Turkey's general election from 1946 to 1950, the two camps of the United States and the Soviet Union gradually formed, and the international situation became increasingly tense. In March 1946, Churchill delivered the "Iron Curtain Speech". Since then, the U.S. policy toward the Soviet Union has gradually been tough. On February 21, 1947, Britain submitted two notes with similar contents to the United States, claiming that Britain would not be able to provide further financial assistance to Greece and Turkey after March 31th. In order to prevent these two countries from falling under the control of the Soviet Union, it was hoped that the United States would undertake the obligation to assist Greece and Turkey from April 1st.

These two notes showed that Britain has handed over the task of leading the world to the United States, together with all its burdens and glory. Britain's withdrawal from the eastern Mediterranean provided an important opportunity for the introduction of the Truman Doctrine. On February 27th, 1947, Truman discussed with the leaders of the two parties in Congress the issue of aid to Greece and Turkey. Deputy Secretary of State Dean Gooderham Acheson explained in detail the necessity of American aid to Greece and Turkey. On March 12th, Truman delivered his address at the joint meeting of the two houses of Congress, claiming that the existence of Greece was threatened by terrorism. Once Greece fell as an independent country, its neighboring Turkey would be directly and seriously affected, and chaos and disorder would probably spread to the whole Middle East, even to the United States, European countries, and even the whole world. He asked Congress to authorize \$400 million in aid to Greece and Turkey, and select American civilian and military personnel to supervise the use of American aid. On April 22nd and May 9th, the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States Congress passed the Aid to Greece and Turkey Act, which was officially implemented on May 22nd, and American forces penetrated into Turkey. On June 5th, U.S. Secretary of State Marshall gave a speech at Harvard University and announced the Marshall Plan.

At the same time, the Soviet Union was deeply dissatisfied with Turkey's ambiguous attitude towards the war against Germany for a long time during World War II and asked Turkey to return to its eastern territory and jointly manage the Black Sea Strait, which led to the deteriorating relations between Turkey and the Soviet Union [20].

Under this circumstance, in order to gain the protection of the western countries headed by the United States, Turkey abandoned its long-standing neutral foreign policy of good neighborliness and friendship and began to implement a thorough pro-American and pro-Western diplomatic line. Turkey fully accepted the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, signed an agreement with the United States on American assistance to Turkey on July 12, 1947, and sent representatives to the Paris Economic Conference on the same day, becoming a member of the European Economic Cooperation Committee.

Charles accurately grasped Turkey's pro-Western foreign policy and the deteriorating situation of Turkey-Soviet relations. Charles' exposition reflects British national interests and provides effective information for the British Foreign Office. Meanwhile, most of his conclusions are based on the analysis of existing data, without abandoning objective principles. This is highlighted in Charles' exposition on the relationship between Britain, the United States, and Turkey. In order to strive for Britain's dominant position in Turkish affairs, safeguard Britain's existing political and economic interests in Turkey, and prevent Turkey from being completely reduced to an overseas military base and strategic material supply place for the United States, Charles did have a certain tendency of "suppressing America and promoting Britain" when evaluating Britain's and America's contribution to Turkey's modernization. However, the following two points cannot be ignored: first, Charles did not completely deny the objective role of the American military and economic assistance to Turkey. He just tried to emphasize that the

Marshall Plan cannot realize the westernization, modernization, and industrialization of Turkey once and for all. Facing the present situation that “the majority of Turks still lack initiative and motivation to advance”, the innovation of ideological and cultural levels may be even more crucial [2]. Secondly, the adoption of the pro-Western diplomatic line is, to a large extent, the helpless choice of the Turkish government under the circumstances that the Soviet Union exerted strong political and military pressure on the eastern territory of Turkey and the Black Sea Strait. As early as the Ottoman Turkish Empire, Britain had all kinds of contacts with Turkey around the “Eastern Issue”. Therefore, Charles’ conclusion that “Turkey trusts Britain more than the United States” based on the two arguments of “territorial security is the decisive factor of Turkey’s foreign policy” and “Britain’s deeper involvement in Turkey’s affairs” has its historical and practical basis, which is convincing to some extent.

3. Charles’ Misjudgment and Turkey’s Political Culture

3.1. A Diachronic Investigation of the Relationship between the Turkish Government and Farmers: From the Mid-19th Century to the 1940s

There are some differences between the prediction made by Charles ten days before the general election in Turkey in 1950 and the actual results of the general election, which is highlighted in his judgment of farmers’ votes. Charles originally speculated that Turkish farmers would tend to support the Republican People’s Party. However, judging from the overall results of the general election, the Democratic Party won the support of most farmers. Most of the conclusions made by Charles in his diplomatic letters are based on extensive field visits and data collation. So, why did he make the above misjudgment? The author believes that this is due to Charles’ lack of a keen grasp of the internal changes of Turkish political culture, especially the changes in farmers’ roles in Turkish political ecology, or there was a certain lag in his opinions.

From the period of the Ottoman Empire to the national struggle in the early 20th century, and to the founding of the Republic of Turkey, the agricultural situation in Turkey has always been different from other third-world countries, and most of the latter is plagued by the increasing population and land shortage. Although with the commercialization of agriculture, the land is gradually concentrated among the landlords and rural nobles who account for a small number of the rural population, Turkey has a small population, and theoretically, there is still enough land to meet the demand. The real problem of the cultivated land in Turkey is not the lack of land, but the labor shortage aggravated by years of wars and population loss. Therefore, it is difficult for the state power to win the support of farmers by depriving landlords of land and distributing it to farmers. In some special periods, the state condoned or even assisted the exploitation of farmers by landlords and rural nobles. “The essence of the cultivated land problem in Turkey is a political problem, not an economic one” [18]. Farmers have always been exploited and oppressed by landlords and rural nobles, and believe that the state is responsible for this. How to properly handle the relationship with farmers who make up the majority of the country’s population has become a concern of successive Turkish governments and political parties. This section will sort this out from a diachronic perspective.

In the 19th century, the new bureaucratic class in the Ottoman court initiated a new reform and reorganization plan, which was called Tanzimat by Turks (Turkish, which means “reform”). Tanzimat reformers accepted western ideas, implemented free trade policies, and commercial activities increased rapidly, forcing farmers to produce more and more products for the market. At the same time, reformers supported landlords, took the landlord class as the foundation of the country, gave landlords more freedom, and allowed landlords to sell their products directly to foreign countries, which accelerated the commercialization of agriculture and made land prices soar. The reformers deliberately destroyed the old social and economic structure to

speed up the process of westernization, but they caused dissatisfaction among a large number of farmers [11, 12, 13, 18].

From 1908 to 1909, the bourgeois revolution launched and led by the young Turks aimed at opposing the feudal autocratic rule of Abdül Hamid II and implementing the constitutional monarchy, accompanied by the promise of “freedom, equality, and justice”, raised the hopes of rural Anatolia. Farmers once thought that “the constitutional system will introduce a fair way of taxation, bring law and order into the countryside, reduce the burden of military service, and end the rude law enforcement by officials” [18]. However, when the journalist Ahmet Serif came to Anatolia in 1909, he found that the change that farmers longed for had not happened. On the contrary, the state was indifferent to the living conditions of farmers, and the power of feudal landlords and nobles increased with the increase of state power. According to the cries of local farmers, the state imposed taxes and even sold farmers’ pots and pans, resulting in farmers always being in debt. In order to collect debts, landlords ordered their villains to beat farmers or send farmers to prison. Even if the state tried to provide loans to help farmers through the Agricultural Bank, the money will not fall into the hands of farmers, but into the pockets of rural nobles [14]. Although the United Party recognized the necessity of rescuing farmers from feudal landlords and rural nobles, considering that tithing was an important financial source for the state to repay foreign debts, they finally gave up the reform plan to break the landlord’s power, continued to implement the Tanzhimet policy, and strengthened the control of farmers through laws [18]. This naturally makes farmers more and more alienated from the country.

During World War I, a large number of peasants were recruited and sent to various fronts, and they were killed, or lucky enough to survive and become bandits. In order to alleviate the labor shortage and meet the rapidly increasing demand for agricultural products during the war, the government established a labor service system, forcing women and children to work in the fields. The gap between farmers and the country has become more serious [18].

As a result, Turkish farmers have gradually formed such a consciousness that all kinds of revolutionary wars and political changes in this country were only episodes, and their living conditions, exploited by rural nobles and landlords and ignored by the national government, would not change because of these episodes. Instead of actively participating in political struggles, it is better to passively wait for the storm to pass. Therefore, Kemalist is faced with a bunch of gloomy and painful peasants, and it is difficult for nationalists to call on peasants to join the new recruits. In desperation, Kemalists had to cooperate with landlords and local squires to maintain or even consolidate the status quo in rural areas. The People’s Party came into being, and the landlord was an important part of the party. The two-tier and indirect election system ensures the existence of a powerful landlord lobby in parliament [18]. Therefore, the literacy and education work carried out by the Republican People’s Party government in rural Anatolia in the 1930s and 1940s was unexpectedly blocked by landlords and squires. The original plan of establishing rural schools could have changed the backward appearance of rural Turkey, but it was finally ended under the attack of conservative forces [18]. To a large extent, this failure can be said to be the cost of the Republican People’s Party’s cooperation with conservative forces such as landlords and squires at the beginning of its establishment.

There is a serious gap between farmers and the government, and farmers are often indifferent to the country’s revolutionary war, regime change, and political reform. This is a chronic disease that has existed in Turkey since the Ottoman Empire, and it is also an extremely distinctive content in Turkish political culture.

3.2. The Transformation of Turkish Political Culture Promoted by the Competition between the Two Parties

Under the top-down authoritarian political model formed in the Kemal era, Turkey's party politics and government politics are integrated, and the opposition parties disappear from the political arena. The parliamentary elections become a mere formality. In this political ecology, the broad masses of peasants lack the necessary political space even if they have a subjective willingness to participate in politics. From 1938 to 1947, through the joint efforts of President Inonu, the government of the Republican People's Party, and other political parties, the multi-party system, and the principle of separation between the party and the government were established, which removed many institutional obstacles for farmers to participate in politics. However, Turkish farmers' distrust of the government and indifference to national politics was still widespread. Under the competitive electoral system, the political atmosphere in which the Republican People's Party and the Democratic Party compete for farmers' votes, especially the clever and flexible political propaganda strategy of the Democratic Party, has become the key to breaking this ice.

Before the general election in 1946, the radical Kemalists in the Republican People's Party had realized the importance of solving the farmers' problems and actively adopted reform measures. In January 1945, the Republican People's Party submitted a new land reform bill to the parliament, which was passed on June 11th of the same year. The contents of the bill included the maximum limit of privately owned real estate is 500 ha (1 ha is about 1 hectare), and the excess should be sold to poor farmers who cultivate the land. In densely populated areas, the share of farmers and tenants were 20 ha and 5 ha, respectively. The government provided farmers with interest-free loans for 20 years to purchase land and related farm tools [15]. "It is estimated that nearly five million people, who account for about one-third of the total rural population, will benefit from this law. If all of the contents were realized, it would be a major revolution, thus turning Turkey into an independent country with small landowners" [19]. However, critics of the bill believed that the bill violated the principle of constitutional law to protect private property, and that land reform would lead to a decline in production, which would further lead to all kinds of counterproductive consequences. Among them, four major critics founded the Democratic Party in January 1946 to further attack the government [15].

The existence of the Democratic Party poses a threat to the ruling position of the Republican People's Party. Radicals in the Republican People's Party advocated land reform, won the support of farmers, workers, and small businessmen, and isolated Democrats representing landlords and big businessmen. However, the Central Committee of the Republican People's Party decided to abolish Article 22 of the Party's Constitution (the content of which is "it is forbidden to set up communities aimed at promoting class differences, class interests and regionalism"), and continued to seek the balance between classes. As a result, "due to self-contradiction, the Republican People's Party failed to appease any voters except traditional supporters" [18].

Compared with the Republican People's Party, the Democratic Party's campaign skills in this period can be described as ingenious and flexible, specifically including the following three points:

First, the Democratic Party claims that its main goal is to promote democracy, limit government intervention as much as possible, increase individual freedom and rights, and make political initiative come from the public, rather than from political parties. This is a statement that meets the demands of the people. By promoting "people's sovereignty" and "freedom and democracy", the Democratic Party quickly became the spokesman for the private sector and individual demands and became a political party of "lay people" (including farmers, workers, small businessmen, and other groups). "Lay people" began to believe that by helping the Democratic

Party come to power, they could not only liberate themselves from an oppressive country but also improve their material life by the Democratic Party [18]. Before the general election in 1950, practical changes in national politics, such as the liberalization policy gaining momentum and the revision of the electoral law, further increased people's trust in the Democratic Party. Second, the Democratic Party has skillfully utilized the public's psychology, including the public's hostility to the government and the public's memory of past sufferings. Democrats constantly emphasized the tyranny of a one-party state and promised to erase it from the people's backs [18]. Democrats have repeatedly reminded people that "nothing will really change as long as 'sly fox' Inonu is still in power" [18]. Facts have demonstrated that such propaganda has worked. All kinds of people's dissatisfaction with the status quo were concentrated on the ruling Republican People's Party, and Inonu became a symbol of a one-party dictatorship. For farmers, their most direct contradictions are landlords, local squires, and gendarmes. After the inspiration of the Democrats, they realized the deeper structural ills above the local conservative forces.

Third, the Democratic Party abandoned the strategy of attacking the state bureaucracy, emphasized the differences between the party and the state, and blamed the problems of the state on the Republican People's Party rather than the state bureaucracy. In this way, the bureaucracy was neutralized, and officials would no longer canvass on behalf of the ruling party [18]. The essence of this strategy of the Democratic Party is to oppose the political ecology in which the government and political parties are integrated in one seamless manner during the ruling period of the Republican People's Party. The neutrality of the bureaucratic system provides the majority of voters with the opportunity to vote according to their true thoughts, which greatly stimulates the enthusiasm of the people to participate in the election.

Whenever Bayar was asked what he thought of the difference between the Democratic Party and the Republican People's Party, he always liked to answer with the metaphor of cooking. He compared the two parties to chefs preparing desserts, claiming that Democrats had better recipes and superior skills, so they could make better desserts [18]. Under the clever and flexible political propaganda of the Democratic Party, the broad masses of peasants who were originally indifferent to national politics began to believe that, under the leadership of the Democratic Party, they could effectively participate in the national political reform and hopefully get rid of the miserable life of oppression and exploitation since the Ottoman rule. Farmers' political awareness has undoubtedly been strengthened, and they regarded the upcoming 1950 general election as a rare opportunity. It can be said that on the eve of the general election, the political practice of the Democratic Party pushed Turkish farmers from the edge of the political arena to the center, and farmers began to influence the performances of political parties with a positive attitude. Turkey's political culture has quietly changed. The political practice of Kemal's "the real structuring upwards" was thus opened.

3.3. The "Orientalism" Thought of Charles' Observation Perspective

Charles is not unaware of the changes in Turkish political culture. For example, in the document of May 8th, 1950, Charles pointed out that it was difficult for the Democratic Party to directly attack the specific content of the policy program published by the Republican People's Party on April 17, 1950, because it covered almost all the needs of voters in the social economy, national defense and diplomacy. Therefore, the Democrats' strategy is to take advantage of the dissatisfaction caused by the Republican People's Party in the long-term ruling process at home and point out that its newly announced policy outline is nothing more than a commonplace. Only when the Democratic Party comes to power can these promises be turned into reality from a dead letter [1].

But on the whole, Charles' understanding of this change is lagging behind. In other words, it was not until the official start of the general election that he unexpectedly discovered that the

Democratic Party had won the support of the majority of farmers, and summarized the reasons such as “farmers are eager for change” and “the new electoral law aroused farmers’ instinct to use their right to vote against the current government”. Although Charles made an incisive summary ten days before the general election, “Farmers’ votes are undoubtedly the most important single factor” [1]. However, he obviously failed to notice the improvement of Turkish farmers’ political consciousness in time. In the document written to Bevan on March 1st, 1950, Charles compared the different views of western tourists who stayed in Turkey for a short time with those of Europeans who lived in Turkey for a long time:

“Thus visitors from the United States and Western Europe usually come to the conclusion, after a short stay in Turkey, that there is no perceptible progress by western standards. The country’s staple exports consists still of raw materials, agricultural or mineral products taken from the soil and sold as they are. No addition to their value is made by any local processing or manufacture. Among the working and farming classes there is no apparent desire for advance. Wealthy landed gentry build themselves pretentious houses in western style but make no change in their habits of life. Most peasants still use a wooden plough of mediaeval design and their methods of civilization prevent them from rising above the subsistence level. The sparsity of the population, the severity of the climate and the still inadequate system of communications are further obstacles to the proper exploitation of the land. So are ignorance and apathy. Individuals and corporate bodies lack the urge not only to improve conditions, but even to maintain them. ... Old residents, however, Europeans as well as Turks, see the scene in a different light and point to many signs of progress. They find most progress in the towns, but they also see important changes in the life of the countryside leading to enlightenment and greater economic activity. In the comparatively short period, in terms of oriental revolution, since the republic was founded in 1923, three important influences have contributed to westernize and deprovincialise the outlook of the Turks. The first is improved communications, by land and sea. ... The second influence is the penetration of manufactures and foreign consumer goods into the interior. ... Lastly, there is the improvement in education. ... The masses as a whole are still devoid of initiative and forward urge. Their conditions of life, in the smaller towns and villages, are still primitive in the extreme, and they doubtless do not think much for themselves. But there is to-day a leaven of individuals whose minds are turned to the west, while a generation ago there was none.” [2]

This passage reveals the essential reason why Charles failed to keenly capture the changes in Turkish political culture before the election. Charles’ lag is fundamentally due to his “orientalism” [21] observation perspective, that is, he thought that Turks generally lacked the sense of change and desire for progress. Turkey’s traditional economic production mode and national education system are all backward. The only possible way for Turkey to realize modernization is to accept western ideology and culture. With the help of western countries, Turkey can move toward a modernized country with established standards. From this perspective, Turkey, as observed, is aphasia, and it is silently represented. In this semi-mythical narrative, the historical accumulation of Turkey’s nation, language, experience, and culture has been abandoned, and the internal changes in Turkey’s political culture, which are highlighted by the opening of the political practice of “the real bottom-up structure”. The enhancement of farmers’ political awareness and political participation is an important part, which has naturally been ignored.

4. Conclusion

As the British ambassador to Turkey, Charles’ cognition of Turkey’s general election in 1950 and his judgment of Turkey’s political democratization process have his own positions and certain lags because of the western ideological power discourse framework. However, “the

formation and development of modern political systems in Middle East countries depend on many factors such as the economic foundation, social structure, religious and cultural traditions and historical development stages of Middle East countries ... The inherent social characteristics of Middle East countries make them have special stipulations on the development of political democratization, thus reflecting its own law of development and the differences in form and content with western-style democracy" [20]. Therefore, the bias or misunderstanding from the western perspective has its rationality.

More importantly, by examining Charles' argument position and analyzing the reasons for his misjudgment, the milestone significance of the general election in 1950 in Turkey's political democratization has been more profoundly expounded. Firstly, the Republican People's Party and the Democratic Party are consistent in adhering to Kemal's westernization. Therefore, although many new events in the general election in 1950 can be described as the contribution of long-term top-down political reform, to a large extent, they are also gestures made by the two parties to win the support of western countries. Secondly, the political practice of "the real structuring upwards" started by the general election in 1950 is essentially the change in Turkish political culture. The clever campaign skills of the Democratic Party broke the long-standing relationship between farmers and the country, and the majority of farmers came to the center of the Turkish political arena with a more positive attitude.

Last but not least, on the basis of extensive on-the-spot investigation and data collation, Charles was able to accurately capture many new events in this election. With the most important single factor of farmers as the entry point, it was quite remarkable to deeply analyze the internal reasons why the Democratic Party won this election after the general election began.

References

- [1] Sir N. Charles to Mr. Younger, "The Position of Turkish Political Parties Prior to the General Elections," in Further correspondence Respecting Turkey(Part 4), January-December, 1950, Archives Direct, National Archives, UK, FO, 424-290.
- [2] Sir N. Charles to Mr. Bevin, "Conditions in Turkey," in Further correspondence Respecting Turkey (Part 4), January-December, 1950, Archives Direct, National Archives, UK, FO, 424-290.
- [3] Sir N. Charles to Mr. Younger, "Situation in Turkey: Demonstrations at the Funeral of Marshal Cakmak", in Further correspondence Respecting Turkey (Part 4), January-December, 1950, Archives Direct, National Archives, UK, FO, 424-290.
- [4] Sir N. Charles to Mr. Bevin, "Turkey General Elections," in Further correspondence Respecting Turkey (Part 4), January-December, 1950, Archives Direct, National Archives, UK, FO, 424-290.
- [5] Sir N. Charles to Mr. McNeil, "Turkey: Review of the Past Six Months," in Further correspondence Respecting Turkey (Part 4), January-December, 1950, Archives Direct, National Archives, UK, FO, 424-290.
- [6] Sir N. Charles to Mr. McNeil, "Turkey: Annual Review for 1949," in Further correspondence Respecting Turkey (Part 4), January-December, 1950, Archives Direct, National Archives, UK, FO, 424-290.
- [7] Paul Sutton, Bryce Wood. *The Dismantling of the Good Neighbor Policy*. University of Texas Press, 1985.
- [8] Kemal H. Karpat. *Turkey's Politics: the Transition to a Multi-party System*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959.
- [9] Metin Heper, Jacob M. Landau. *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*. London: I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 1991.

- [10] Alan Bullock, Ernest Bevin. Foreign Secretary 1945-1951. London: William Heinemann, 1983.
- [11] Roger Owen, The Middle East in the World Economy 1800-1914. London and New York: Metbuen & Co Ltd, 1981.
- [12] Sevket Pamuk, The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism 1820-1913. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- [13] Reşat Kasaba, The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy-the Nineteenth Century, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988.
- [14] Feroz Ahmad. The Agrarian Policy of the Young Turks 1908-1918//Jean-Louis Bacqué-Grammont and Paul Dumont, eds., *Economie et Sociétés dans L'Empire Ottoman*, Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1983.
- [15] Erik J. Zürcher. *Turkey: A Modern History*[M]. London and New York: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2017.
- [16] Li Bingzhong. "An Exploration into the "Turkish Model"". *Chinese Journal of European Studies, European Studies*, 30.05(2012): 136-151+4.
- [17] Ha Quanan. *History of the Middle East (middle)*. Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Press, 2019.
- [18] Froz Ahmed. *The Formation of Modern Turkey*. Translated by Zheng Dongchao. Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 2020.
- [19] bernard lewis. *The Rise of Modern Turkey*. Translated by Fan Zhonglian. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1982.
- [20] Peng Shuzhi. *General History of Middle East Countries (Turkey Volume)*. Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2002.
- [21] Edward Waefie Said. *Orientalism*. Translated by Wang Yugen. Beijing: Life, Reading and New Knowledge Joint Publishing Company, 2019.