THE FAILURE OF THE NEW ERZINCAN PROJECT IN LIGHT OF PARTY-STATE RELATIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

by

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A thesis presented to
the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

March 2021

Approvals

"The Failure of the New Erzincan Project in Light of Party-State Relations at the Local Level," a thesis prepared by Elşen Mutlu in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts from the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, has been approved on March 26, 2021 by:

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Abstract

The Failure of the New Erzincan Project in Light of Party-State Relations at the Local Level

Elşen Mutlu, Master's Candidate at the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, 2021

Professor Asım Karaömerlioğlu, Thesis Advisor

Erzincan Earthquake in 1939 is one of the greatest natural disaster in the history of the Turkish Republic. More than thirty thousand people have died and city of Erzincan was wiped out of the map. As a response to it, construction of a new modern city which would provide the necessary conditions to live a civilized life for the residents of Erzincan was planned by the single party regime. Even though it tends to be seen as an omnipotent force, single party regime had its limits and they became apparent when it failed to undertake a task as ambitious as building a new city from scratch in Erzincan. Ascribing this failure just to external factors, which were out of the control of the single party regime such as the Second World War, only partially explains the story. The limits which prevented it to materialize New Erzincan were not solely external, but also emanated from the very feature that made this regime so unique in Turkish nation state's history: the relationship between state and party. This uneasy relationship was far from being smooth unlike what is often tend to be envisioned. In this thesis it is argued that, the lack of harmony between the local party organization and local state bureaucracy that reflected itself in the shape of a vicious conflict between the governor and the alliance formed by the head of local party organization and the party inspector, was one of the primary reasons that led the project to its demise.

29,000 words

Özet

Yerel Seviyedeki Parti-Devlet İlişkilerinin Işığında Yeni Erzincan Projesi'nin Başarısızlığı

Elşen Mutlu, Yüksek Lisans Adayı, 2020
Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü

Profesör Asım Karaömerlioğlu, Tez Danışmanı

1939 Erzincan Depremi Türkiye Cumhuriyeti tarihinin en büyük doğal afetlerinden biridir. Otuz binden fazla insan hayatını kaybetmiş ve Erzincan şehri haritadan silinmiştir. Buna cevaben tek parti rejimi tarafından Erzincan'da yaşayan vatandaşlara medeni bir yaşam sürebilmeleri için gerekli koşulları sağlayacak yeni modern bir şehrin inşası planlanmıştır. Tek parti rejimini her şeye kadir bir güç olarak görme eğilimi yaygın olsa da bu rejimin de sınırları vardı ve bunlar Erzincan'da sıfırdan yeni bir şehir inşa etme gibi cüretkar bir girişimin başarısızlığa uğramasıyla belirgin hale geldi. Bu başarısızlığı yalnızca İkinci Dünya Savaşı gibi tek parti rejiminin kontrolü dışında gelişen dışsal etkenlere atfetmek kısmen açıklayıcı olur. Bu rejimin Yeni Erzincan'ı inşa edememesine neden olan limitler yalnızca dıştan değil, aynı zamanda bu rejimi Türk ulus devletinin tarihinde eşsiz kılan özelliğinden: devlet ve parti arasındaki ilişkiden de kaynaklanmaktaydı: Bu ilişki çoğu zaman tasavvur edilenin aksine pürüzsüz olmaktan çok uzaktı. Bu tezde; yerel parti teşkilatı lideri ve parti müfettişinin oluşturduğu ittifak ile vali arasında şiddetli bir çatışma şeklinde kendini gösteren yerel parti teşkilatı ile yerel devlet bürokrasisi arasındaki ahenksizliğin, projenin başarısızlığa sürükleyen ana nedenlerden biri olduğu iddia edilmektedir.

29,000 sözcük

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1. Introduction

Erzincan was hit by a massive earthquake on December 27, 1939 at 1.57 am. Its magnitude was 7.8 M_w and its intensity was 12; the maximum on Mercalli Intensity scale. 9,189 people have died and 6,601 buildings were destroyed in the city alone. Heavy number of casualties were further increased by the cold weather and heavy blizzard that caused felt temperature to fall as low as -35°C. Despite the catastrophic scale of the material and human losses inflicted by it, scholarship about the earthquake is very limited and largely centered on the memory of the earthquake or immediate responses of government to the disaster and the coming of foreign aid.[1]

However, the state policy on Erzincan was far exceeding the provision of rudimentary needs of citizens such as clothing, food and temporary housing. The state planned to construct a new modern city which would provide the necessary conditions to live a civilized life for the residents of Erzincan. It was a massive chance for the Republic to leave its mark on the backward Eastern portion of the country which had been largely neglected. However, the New Erzincan project failed to materialize apart from construction of some government buildings, a cemetery and a massive İnönü monument which remained alone in a grotesque fashion in the middle of the construction site of the new city only to demonstrate to the next generations the great contrast between the huge ambitions of the Republic to revitalize Erzincan after the earthquake and the miniscule amount of work done by it to achieve that purpose.

[1]Some of the publications focusing on these topics are listed below:
Arpacı, Murat. "Şehrin Çöküşü ve Hafıza Mekanının İnşası: 1939 Erzincan Depremi Üzerine." *İnsan Bilimleri İçin Kaynak Araştırmalı Dergisi 45*, (2018): 221-238.
Tuğluoğlu, Fatih. "1939 Büyük Anadolu Zelzelesi ve Erzincan Vilayetinde Yardım Faaliyetleri." *International Journal of History 7*, no. 4 (2015): 113-136.
Haçin, İlhan. "1939 Erzincan Büyük Depremi." Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi 88, no. 30 (2014): 37-70.
Atlı, Cengiz. "1939 Erzincan Depremi'nde İngilizlerin Yardımları." Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi 34, no. 7 (2014): 247-255.

The literature that deals with the Republican ambitions in Erzincan has been quite limited. Only Erdem Yavuz conducted a research on this failed project as part of his seminal book on 1939 Erzincan Earthquake. He argues that the adverse conditions brought by the Second World War was the primary reason of this failure.[2] This view was shared by Fatih Orhan as well who suggests that belated reconstruction of the city could be explained by "negative atmosphere created by the war which had severe political and economic impacts on Turkey."[3] Recognizing the enormous strains put by the war on material resources of the country and the scarcity brought by it in numerous fields, I argue that the lack of harmony between the local party organization and local state bureaucracy that reflected itself in the shape of a vicious conflict between the governor and the alliance formed by the head of local party organization and the party inspector, was one of the primary reasons that led the project to its demise.

[2] Erdem Yavuz, *1939 Depremi (Erzincan ve Bölgeye Etkisi)* (Istanbul: Arı Sanat Yayınevi, 2017), 153.

[3] Fatih Orhan, "Depremlerin Şehir ve Mesken Mimarisine Olan Etkilerine Coğrafi Bir Bakış: 1939 Erzincan Depremi Örneği," *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi 23*, no. 1 (2019): 339.

1.1 Geography and Brief History of Erzincan

Erzincan Plain is situated on the infamous North Anatolian Fault (NAF). Plain had been subject to 36 large earthquakes in the last millennium, and in 11 of them the city of Erzincan was destroyed.[4] Despite the cyclical devastation brought by earthquakes, Erzincan plain did not cease to attract migration and continued to be inhabited by humans. No matter how severe it was, after each catastrophe Erzincan was founded again and again. The perseverance of its inhabitants in keeping their city alive in the face of notorious geological forces was mainly caused by Erzincan plain's favorable climate for agriculture and its advantageous geographical position on historical roads that traversed Anatolian peninsula on east-west axis.[5] These features of the plain destined Erzincan to be a highly strategic military outpost and a trade hub with a large agricultural potential.

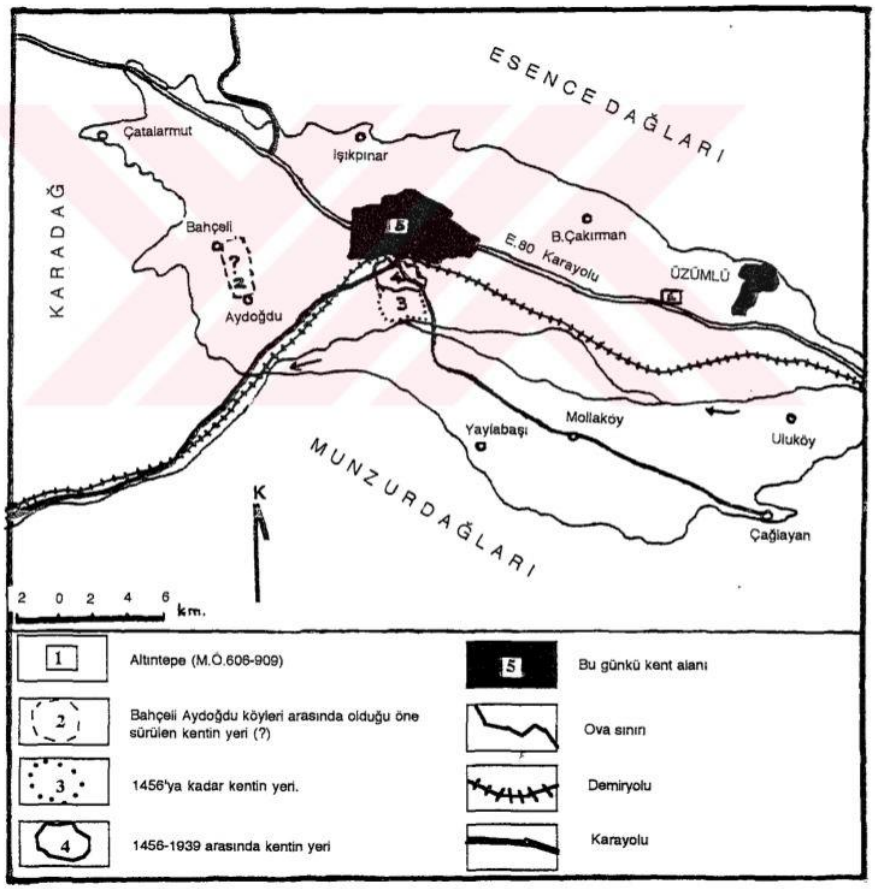
The plain covers an area of 560 km^2 and is situated 1200 meters above the sea level. It is shielded by Esence mountain range from its northern flank and Munzur range from south. Plain opens to neighboring provinces by Sansa Strait in the east and Kemah Strait in the west. These mountain ranges reach up to 3000 meters and are so steep that they do not feature any sizable terraces, that could otherwise house human settlements. This led villages to be established largely on lower altitudes, particularly on the zones where mountains meet with the plain.[6] Steep topography constrained the city of Erzincan to be constructed on the young plain itself which had started to develop only around one million years ago.[7] This time period is not enough for the material that accumulated and formed the plain over time to transform into solid

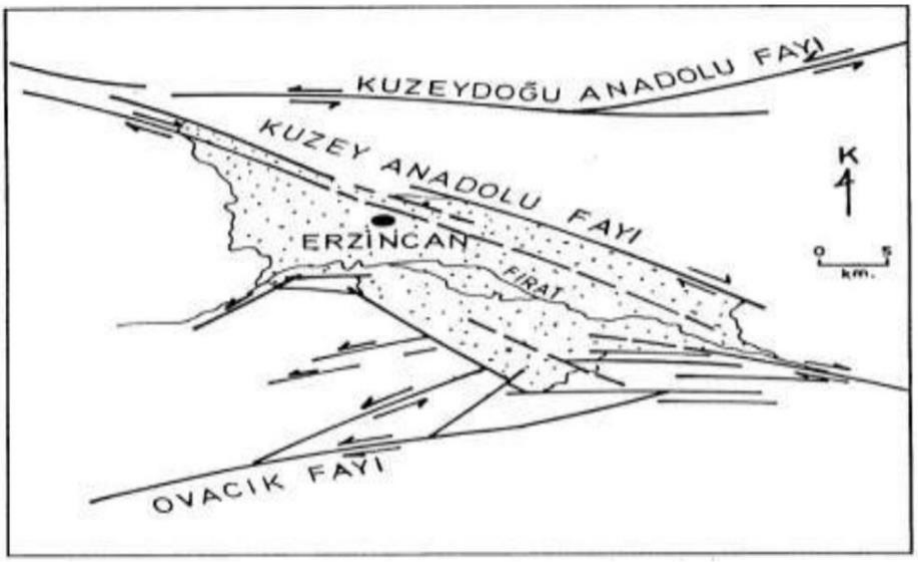
[4] Erdem Yavuz, *1939 Depremi*, 11-12.
[5] Abdülkadir Gül and Adem Başıbüyük, *Bir Tarihi Coğrafya İncelemesi (Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Erzincan Kazası)* (Konya: Salkımsöğüt Yayınları, 2011), 8.
[6] Nurettin Birol, *19. Yüzyılda Erzincan Tanzimat'tan Birinci Dünya Savaşına Kadar (1839-1914)* (Istanbul: Arı Sanat Yayınevi, 2020), 114.
[7] Gül and Başıbüyük, *Bir Tarihi Coğrafya İncelemesi,* 10.

rocky formations that can provide a reliable floor for a city to be constructed. The highly unstable character of the young plain floor was one among many reasons that forced humans to move the city northward after each destruction brought by the earthquakes in order to get to a firmer ground at the edges of northern mountains (MAP 1). Humans hoped that a rockier floor would render the buildings less vulnerable against an earthquake.

However, this strategy which was born out of the experience of previous earthquakes contained a fundamental paradox within itself because NAF was passing through the northern edge of the plain, very close to the northern mountain range hence the advantage gained by building the city on a more reliable floor was lost by getting closer to the fault itself (MAP 2). After the 1939 Earthquake the Republican administration became aware of this fact as a result of the research conducted by geologists on the plain.[8] In the face of this geological impasse, not the site of construction but the design of the new buildings and materials used in construction, would be much more crucial in the task of preventing a future earthquake to turn into a large-scale catastrophe.

[8] BCA.030.18.91.60.16.





City of Erzincan's Northward Movement (Map 1)[9]

Main Faults in Erzincan Plain (Map 2)[10]

[9] M. Samet Altınbilek, "Planlama Sorunları Açısından Erzincan'ın Şehir Coğrafyası" (PhD diss., Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 1997), 137.
[10] Fatih Orhan, Depremin Erzincan, 342.

Surrounded by high mountain ranges from south and north, Erzincan plain has a milder climate compared to neighboring provinces. Average temperature in the plain is 10,8°C much warmer than neighboring Sivas, Bayburt and Erzurum where yearly average temperatures are 9°C, 6,8°C and 5,5°C respectively.[11] The climate of the plain is devoid of extremes that even in the coldest month average temperature does not fall below -3°C.[12] Although high mountains prevent a harsh climate to develop in the plain, at the same time they cause yearly average rainfall to remain low compared to other provinces. Yearly average rainfall is only 379,4 mm in the plain but 407,3 mm in Erzurum, 223,7 mm in Sivas and 446,9 mm in Bayburt. Average rainfall in the plain increases in autumn and spring, it reaches its minimum in summer.[13] This rainfall pattern of the plain led humans to settle closer to reliable water sources. Alluvial fans formed by mountain streams such as Mercan Deresi, Vasgird Çayı, Çardaklı Deresi, Cengice Deresi and Sürperen Deresi were ideal for settlement.[14] Fed by the melting snow at the heights of mountain ranges water level of streams remains stable even in summer. These streams flow to the plain and unite with the Karasu river. This river forms a branch of Euphrates, it enters the plain from east passing through Sansa Strait and flows slowly in the plain forming meanders by alluvial accumulation then it gets divided into two branches at the center of the plain forming a large island and leaves the plain flowing through Kemah Strait.[15] Despite the fact that Karasu generates high levels of alluvial accumulation, in the absence of irrigation networks and canals it was forming large swamps. These swamps were covering most of the eastern sector of the plain therefore preventing the huge agricultural potential of the plain to be exploited.[16] In the absence of a large irrigation networks; alluvial fans formed by mountain streams at the northern

[11] Gül and Başıbüyük, *Bir Tarihi Coğrafya İncelemesi,* 17.
[12] Ibid., 18.
[13] Ibid., 17.
[14] Ibid., 20.
[15] Ibid., 19.
[16] BCA.030.10.158.110.1.49.

edges of the plain provided a more favorable environment for agriculture and human settlement, far from bandits infiltrating into the plain from Munzur range and away from large swamps infested with flies which were spreading malaria.[17]

Fertility of alluvial fans was the product of a very delicate environmental process that was highly vulnerable to external pressures. Until the 19th century both the northern and southern mountain range were covered by trees and this dense vegetation was protecting the alluvial fans from the stones and sand that rain water and mountain streams were bringing with themselves as they were flowing into the plain.[18] In addition to protecting the alluvial fans from unwanted materials, organic debris emerging from this vegetation was transported to these alluvial fans by rain and mountain streams, increasing the fertility of the soil.[19] Until the second half of 19th century this delicate ecological balance that kept these northern alluvial fans arable persisted because population of the settlements that formed the Erzincan district (Erzincan kazası) which was composed of the city itself and villages surrounding it, had never reached to a level that could threaten the reproduction of this vegetation.[20] It is worth to note that Erzincan district's population had briefly increased in early modern era. In 16th century district's population increased from 17,351 to 53,468 between 1516 and 1591.[21] However, this escalation did not persist due to the political and environmental instability brought by 17th century.[22] Population depleted to 19,602 in 1636-43. After almost 200 years Erzincan district's population became 15,885.[23] However, in the second half of the 19th century Erzincan's strategic

[17] Gül and Başıbüyük, *Bir Tarihi Coğrafya İncelemesi,* 16.
[18] BCA.030.10.158.110.1.19.
[19] Ibid.
[20] BCA.030.10.158.110.1.20.
[21] Ibid., 191.
[22] See White, Sam. The Climate of Rebellion in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
[23] Ibid. (Only men were counted)

importance increased as a result of the rising Russian threat, 4th army was stationed in Erzincan, this boosted the development of local industry to meet the needs of army, combined with the increase in trade due to the rise of Erzurum as a trade hub, migration from surrounding rural settlements to the plain gained strength.[24] Population therefore rose to 57,306 in 1877-8, 59,174 in 1893 68,424 in 1906-7 and it reached to 70,763 in 1914.[25] Increase in population meant growing exploitation of natural resources. Until the 19th century people in Erzincan and surrounding villages were using trees on the mountains as a source of energy and construction material. As long as the population remained low, sustainability of the vegetation was not under threat but the dramatic increase in population in 19th century unleashed a disastrous process of deforestation. When no trees left people even started to pull grasses and other small plants to use as fuel. This caused rocks and sand brought by mountain streams and rainwater to end up in alluvial fans and the plain itself. Fertilization by organic debris ceased to exist and gradually alluvial fans started to turn into rocky, sandy non-arable waste lands.[26] In addition to its dramatic impact on fertility of the soil, sand was increasing the amount of water needed for agriculture by not allowing the given water to remain longer on upper levels of the soil to easily get absorbed. Combined with the decrease in rainfall due to deforestation and loss of water because of the cracks in riverbeds of mountain streams which caused water to go underground before reaching to the plain itself; water shortage became a major problem in the plain.[27] When İsmet Inonu visited Erzincan on July 31, 1935 as part of his larger travel of Eastern provinces, the adverse effects of this process were clearly visible. District's population was less than its pre-war level with 60,012 people.[28] Peasants were constantly leaving their lands which were

[24] Nurettin Birol, *19. Yüzyılda Erzincan,* 103.
[25] Gül and Başıbüyük, *Bir Tarihi Coğrafya İncelemesi,* 191.
[26] BCA.030.10.158.110.1.19.
[27] BCA.030.10.158.110.1.20.
[28] Gül and Başıbüyük, *Bir Tarihi Coğrafya İncelemesi,* 181.

becoming less fertile and demanding more water year after year, only forty percent of the plain was under cultivation.[29]

After his visit İnönü ordered Trabzon deputy Mithat Aydın who was an engineer to prepare a report on a large infrastructure project which would save the plain. Aydın prepared a three-staged plan which included restoring the mountain streams, draining the swamps and lastly increasing the amount water for irrigation of reclaimed lands; reforestation of the valleys would go hand to hand with this project and at the last stage of the plan at least 30.000 migrants from Romania would be settled in the plain.[30] As a result of this settlement the number of Turkish speaking majority in the province vis-a-vis the Kurdish speaking minority would be increased. According to the census conducted in 1927 their numbers were 77,149 and 54,877 respectively.[31] Next year project started and by 1939 a significant progress was recorded in draining large swamps.[32] Even though this complex project was interrupted by the earthquake, it was not abandoned altogether. It restarted in 1942 with the restoration of Vasgirt mountain stream but due to the problems emerging in funding during the post war era, the project could not be finished. It was inherited by the Democrat Party government.[33]

Although local industry in Erzincan was in steady decline as well, unlike the agricultural sector, no development project has been proposed to regenerate it after İnönü's visit. In the

[29] BCA.030.10.158.110.1.49.
[30] Erdem Yavuz, *Türk İktisat Tarihinde Erzincan (1923-1960)* (Istanbul: Arı Sanat Yayınevi, 2017), 64.
See Öztan, Ramazan Hakkı. "Settlement Law of 1934: Turkish Nationalism in the Age of Revisionism." *Journal of Migration History* 6, no. 1 (n.d.): 82–103.
[31] Erdal Aydoğan and Ahmet İlyas, "1927 Nüfus Sayımına Göre Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Devleti'nde Kürt Nüfus ve Nitelikleri" (paper presented at the Kimlik, Kültür ve Değişin Sürecinde Osmanlı'dan Günümüze Kürtler Uluslararası Sempozyumu, Bingöl Üniversitesi, Bingöl, 6-8 September 2012), 224.
[32] BCA.490.01.646.142.1.88.
[33] Erdem Yavuz, *Türk İktisat Tarihinde Erzincan*, 72.

Republican era, the city was far from overcoming the adverse effects of the long Russian occupation which took place between 13.07.1916 and 13.02.1918.[34] However, in 19th century local industry had been steadily growing boosted by the deployment of 4th army to Erzincan. In 1888 there were only one rough cloth (aba) factory and one tannery founded by military but by 1904 14 tanneries, a military workshop, a weaving workshop, 5 linseed oil workshops, 7 gunpowder workshops and many small boot workshops were operating in the city.[35] In addition to these facilities which were closely linked to the military, Erzincan was home to a highly developed copper industry. Before the war Erzincan was exporting 15,000 kg copper sheets to Europe via Erzurum-Trabzon route and small workshops were producing high quality copper equipment.[36] Kitchen-bath utensils produced in Erzincan's workshops were even displayed in Paris Vienna and Philadelphia international fairs and gained fame in Europe.[37] High quality steel knives and silverworks produced by the skilled artisans in the sizeable Armenian community of the district which had 4000 members according to 1917 census, were in high demand too.[38] In addition to these sectors; weaving was a major economic activity in the city and other districts of Erzincan province. The production of high quality fabrics which Marco Polo and Ibn-I Battuta had written about was dating back to Middle Age. A large dye house and numerous weaving shops existed in Kemah and Erzincan in 16th century.[39] In the middle of 19th century Kemaliye was exporting cloth to almost all Eastern provinces and some Black Sea provinces.[40] Despite the pressures of capitulations on the competitiveness of textile produced in Kemaliye, this industry has managed to survive and continued to exist albeit in a

[34] Tahir Erdoğan Şahin, *Anadolu'nun Tarihi Akışı İçerisinde Siyasi, Ekonomik, Sosyal ve Kültürel Açıdan Erzincan Tarihi*, vol. 1 (Erzincan: Erzincan Hayra Hizmet ve Dayanışma Vakfı Yayınları, 1987), 367.
[35] Ibid., 100.
[36] Nurettin Birol, *19. Yüzyılda Erzincan,* 103.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Erdem Yavuz, *Türk İktisat Tarihinde Erzincan,* 113.
[40] Yeni Erzincan, 16.04.1942.

diminished scale during Republican Era. However, industry facilities which had been formed in late 19th and early 20th century in Erzincan could not survive after the war. By 1927 only 1201 people were occupied in industrial sectors out of 46100 total work force.[41] During the 1930s manufacture in the city did not exceed the scale of small workshops.

In the short period between the visit of İnönü and the 1939 earthquake, plain was slowly recovering by the measures taken within the framework of large infrastructure project. Arable lands and the amount of water directed to the plain were increasing. Railroad reached to Erzincan in 1938 and Erzincan became better connected to administrative-economic center of the country. Construction of railroad created a short-term increase in employment and a large paved boulevard started to be constructed to connect station to the city center.[42] These changes were promising the citizens in Erzincan better days and better life quality in the future. This slow but steady progress of the city was cut short by the earthquake on 27th of December 1939.

1.2 State-Party Relations

Interwar period saw the rise of totalitarian parties to power in Europe. Italy was home to one of the first examples of this phenomenon. After becoming the single ruling party National Fascist Party (NFP) created its own cadres within the state which led to the emergence of a system where both party and state bureaucrats took role in governance. Gradually the scope of influence of party cadres enlarged to include state bureaucracy itself and NFP became the most effective force over the state. In contrast to this pattern of development in Italy, party organization was checked and kept under control by state bureaucracy in Turkey.[43] However,

[41] Erdem Yavuz, *Türk İktisat Tarihinde Erzincan,* 101.
[42] BCA.490.01.646.142.1.42.
[43] Murat Turan, "Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin Diğer Ülke Partileriyle İlişkisi (1923-1950)" (PhD diss., Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2016), 205.

the strength of this control and methods used to achieve it was susceptible to change. Only during the brief period of party-state union between 1936-39 rules of the relationship between state and party were clarified with regulations that put party into a subservient position vis-a-vis the state. However, in the rest of the single-party era Republican government hesitated to produce a definitive regulation (talimatname) that would explicate the rules of this relation.[44] In an environment where the exact position of party organization next to state bureaucracy was not clarified with clearly demarcated boundaries between their respective scopes of influence, harmony between party cadres and state bureaucracy was rendered fragile. Within this administrative ambiguity frictions at local level between party and state officials could evolve into open conflicts which would annihilate the necessary harmony needed to realize large scale projects.

The emergence of Republican People's Party as a visible force in social life certainly dates back the early 1930s. In the years prior, During the early Republican era, party's activities were limited to the parliament. Party did not act as an instrument of massive mobilization, it publicly defended the policies of the government but made very little effort to encourage grassroots activism and drum up support for the Kemalist policies.[45] The chaotic environment unleashed by the Great Depression of 1929 was the primary factor that led Republican government to transform the party into a useful apparatus which would increase its influence over society by diffusing Republican ideals and systematically collecting information regarding the discontent of citizens. The first steps of this transformation were taken in the 3rd congress of the party which took place on May 10, 1931. It was obvious for the Republican government

[44] Ibid., 177.
[45] Zürcher, Erik J. "Institution Building in the Kemalist Republic: The Role of the People's Party. In *Men of Order Authoritarian Modernization Under Atatürk and Reza Shah*, ed. Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004), 106.

that the weak character of the party was no longer tenable because economic problems were feeding into a broader legitimacy crisis for the new regime by the end of 1930.[46] The sharp decline in the prices of agricultural commodities had caused large decreases in real incomes of most market-oriented agricultural producers and made many merchants go bankrupt. As demand from the agricultural sector declined urban economy was plunged into difficulties too. This produced a sharp sense of collapse and quickly led to popular discontent with the single party regime.[47] The success of the Free Republican Party in municipal elections and popular discontent shown against RPP and state officials shocked the Republican government.[48] The newly founded opposition party was far from working as a safety valve which would appease the fury of society. The political crisis and deteriorating socioeconomic situation combined with several reactionary outbursts such as the Menemen Incident and the Kurdish rebellions in Eastern provinces rendered visible to Republican government the more complex nature of the problems which have reached to the point of legitimacy crisis that could threaten the very foundations of the regime.[49]

Organizational changes were introduced after the 3rd congress in order to overcome this legitimacy crisis. The objective was to transform the party into a two-way functioning mechanism through which republican ideals were transferred to the people and people's opinions and complaints could be conveyed to the political leadership and state institutions.[50] Party's propaganda capability was increased by establishing complementary institutions such as People's Houses and Public Oratory Organization which would collaborate with local party

[46] Yiğit Akın, "Reconsidering State, Party, and Society in Early Republican Turkey: Politics of Petitioning," *International Journal of Middle East Studies 39*, no. 3 (2007):439.
[47] Şevket Pamuk, *Uneven Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 174.
[48] Cem Emrence, "Politics of Discontent in the Midst of the Great Depression: The Free Republican Party of Turkey (1930)," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 23 (2000): 48.
[49] Yiğit Akın, "Reconsidering State," 439.
[50] Ibid.

organizations in diffusing Republican ideals. At the same time existing, civil organizations such as Turkish Women's Unions, Teachers Union and Turkish Hearths were gradually eradicated in order to turn party into the single dominant force in social life.[51] In an environment where political opposition and civil organizations were suppressed new mechanisms which were introduced in the 3rd congress such as demands system and party inspection tours, enabled state institutions and political leadership to hear the discontent of people.

Local party organizations were constituting the starting point of the meticulously designed demands system. "Within the framework of demands system local party organizations became responsible to process demands and complaints coming from the local population and report them to upper divisions, at each level party authorities were required to investigate demands and problems, inform the local bureaucracy of pertinent issues and collaborate with it to fulfill people's needs."[52] Therefore, harmony between local party organization and local state officials was salient in overcoming problems which could be resolved at local level. "Local congress would prepare reports regarding the needs and problems that had to be resolved at the national level and send them to the Grand Congress which would take place in the capital, these demand lists were processed in Grand Congress by a special commission and separate reports were prepared for each ministry."[53]

The party wanted to increase the communication between ordinary citizens and state institutions to such an extent that it aimed to collect complaints and demands which were not detected by the local party organizations, in other words those which were not handed-in in written form to local party organizations. In order to achieve this goal new roles were assigned

[51] Hakkı Uyar, *Tek Parti Dönemi ve Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Istanbul: Boyut, 2012), 304.
[52] Yiğit Akın, "Reconsidering State," 440.
[53] Ibid.

to party inspectors whose responsibilities in the first years of the regime "were limited to party affairs such as supervising the operation of local party agencies enforcing party norms monitoring and implementing party decisions, reporting on complacency and corruption of local party officials and proposing for eliminating specified inadequacies."[54] After the 3rd congress, party inspectors were charged with making periodic inspection tours to remote areas of provinces as well, "supplying detailed information about people's complaints about laws, taxes, local bureaucracy, local party organization, party leadership, municipal services and city council activities."[55] "After being processed and classified at party headquarters summaries of inspectors' reports were sent to related ministries, thus after the 3rd Congress the inspection mechanism served not only to supervise party organization and cadres but also to acquire information about distant corners of the country."[56]

Party's transformation from an inefficient unit stuck in parliament into a two-way functioning mechanism that propagated Republican ideals and collected the demands of people required establishment of new local party organizations in areas where previously party was non-existent and already existing party organizations had to be strengthened. In an environment where majority of the population was living in small settlements scattered across the country, party needed local elites who were respected in their community to make its voice heard.[57] These wealthy and respected leaders of the local communities were not forming a unified social force that could pose a threat to the party's penetration into their local communities; on the contrary they were divided and competing with each other in order to gain more power in their

[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid., 441.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Tülay Aydın, "Tek Parti Döneminde CHP'nin Taşra Örgütlenmesi ve Merkez-Taşra İlişkileri (1935-1945)" (PhD diss., Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2018), 246.

community.[58] They saw local party organization as a strategic post to acquire more power vis-a-vis their local rivals.[59] As a result local powerful families competed with each other in order to control the local party organization.[60] In most cases families which gained the control of local party organization, filled seats of its board of administration (yönetim kurulu) with their own family members and spread their influence by putting other family members to the administration of People's House and ultimately by gaining control of the municipality.[61] Moreover the high possibility of a mayor or head of a local party organization to be a deputy in Grand National Assembly made the competition more severe.[62] The party which essentially aimed to make its voice heard in remote areas through these local elites, kept a neutral position and acted as a mediator through party inspectors in their competition.[63] In most of the provinces, it was common to see local party organization, the People's House and municipality all were controlled by the same family for a long time. This limited the dynamism of the party and numerous complaints emerged about local party administrators who used the power they acquired through the party over ordinary citizens and low degree civil servants.[64]

By the 4th Congress in 1935, the party's visibility in social life reached to an unprecedented level. All civil organizations were now liquated and party was trying to reach to the capillaries of society by its local branches, People's Houses and inspectors. Moreover, party's new position as an intermediary between the upper echelons of state bureaucracy and society enabled ordinary citizens to openly complain about local state officials through the party

[58] Ibid.
[59] Murat Metinsoy, "Kemalizmin Taşrası: Erken Cumhuriyet Taşrasında Parti, Devlet Ve Toplum," *Toplum ve Bilim* 118 (2010): 137.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid., 129.
[62] Tülay Aydın, Tek Parti Döneminde, 256.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid., 257.

without being afraid of their pressure. As inspectors were reflecting upon the complaints about local state bureaucracy in their reports, they were analyzing the works, integrity and competence of these local state officials, hence they were de facto inspecting the local state officials in their inspection tours. Equipped with such new functions, the party emerged as a third party in the relationship between state and society which gave it a chance to exert influence on state bureaucracy. At the local level complicated webs of relations emerged between head of party organizations-mayors-governors-district governors (kaymakam)-village headmen (muhtar) that facilitated corruption, nepotism and favoritism.[65] Faced with the increasing influence and pressure of local elites who controlled the local party organization, the governors either succumbed and did not inform the center about their actions or actively collaborated with local party officials.[66] Governors who were appointed from outside, were at an inferior position compared to elected local elites that controlled the local party organization whose power was situated on a firm socio-economic basis.[67] A clash with them would jeopardize the harmony between local party organization and local state officials which was mandatory in smoothly administering the province. So decreasing efficiency in administration would eventually threaten the seat of the governor.

Apart from the local party officials, party inspectors were emerging as strong actors. In order to alleviate the coldness between citizens and state bureaucracy they were trying to renew the image of rigid bureaucrats and positing themselves as caring benevolent officials.[68] Patiently listening and understanding the ordinary citizens they were turning into reliable "protectors" of them whom they could complain about "cruel" local state officials.

[65] Ibid., 280.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid., 285.
[68] Ibid., 291.

The growing influence of party officials over state bureaucracy at local level was wanted to be translated into concrete institutional changes by Recep Peker who had served the party as the general secretary of the party during its transformation since 1931. Before making his attempt to institutionalize party's influence over the state he was already making personal attempts to put pressure on state bureaucracy as can be seen in his personal feud with Kazım Dirik who was the governor of İzmir between 1926-35. Collaborating with head of party's local organization in İzmir, Hacim Muhittin Çarıklı, he tried to remove him from his post but Atatürk was personally involved in this conflict and supported Kazım Dirik. He criticized Hacim Murat Çarıklı of "administering the local party organization in Committee of Union and Progress mentality" and forced him to resign."[69]

Peker made the most serious attempt to change the subservient position of the party visa vis the state in 1936 by preparing a report which contained a new comprehensive party program and code (tüzük) based on his observations in Italy and Germany. In line with the Western totalitarian regimes, report aimed to expand the power of party over state by proposing establishment of a Fascist Council over the parliament.[70] Atatürk fiercely rejected the proposal and removed Peker from his post immediately. Peker tried to redeem himself after his deposition by publishing an article in which he declared "RPP is not over the state but side by side with the state" openly renouncing his aspirations about a party hegemony over the state.[71]

After Peker's deposition on June 15, 1936, the Republican government took measures to put an end to the attempts of RPP to control state bureaucracy by declaring unification of

[69] Murat Turan, "Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin," 221-223.
[70] Hasan Rıza Soyak, *Atatürk'ten Hatıralar* (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1973), 63.
[71] Murat Turan, "Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin," 225.

party and state on June 18, 1936. Based on this new regulation, governors became head of local party organizations and party inspectorship was abolished. General inspectors became the "inspector of all party activities and organizations in their region as they were the inspector of all state activities."[72] The unification of party and state could not end the arbitrary use of local party officials' power but reached certain amount of success in reducing corruption, but emerging problems far exceeded benefits.[73]

Party's capacity to hear the voice of citizens significantly decreased. In the absence of party inspectors citizens were encouraged to openly declare their complaints and demands in local congress.[74] Highest local state officials would attend to local congresses and comprehensively answer questions, demands and complaints declared by citizens.[75] However, the participation of ordinary citizens to local congresses remained low and they were hesitant to openly declare their complaints because they became confused about to whom they should complain.[76] Since the head of local party organization was the governor, it seemed non-practical to share their complaints about local state officials with the administrative head of the province.[77]

Prestige of the party started to decrease in the eyes of both citizens and state officials. Ordinary citizens started to see party as an obsolete institution as it became inseparable from the state hence number of new members joining the party decreased after the union.[78] Moreover, governors who were reluctant to spare the necessary time for party works, were undermining

[72] Cemil Koçak, *Geçmişiniz İtinayla Temizlenir* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), 111.
[73] Tülay Aydın, Tek Parti Döneminde, 276.
[74] Cemil Koçak, *Geçmişiniz*, 117.
[75] Ibid., 119.
[76] Tülay Aydın, Tek Parti Döneminde, 275.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Ibid.

the relevance of party as well; seeing its power as an artificial construct.[79] This perception of party was spreading to lower state officials in the provinces, harming the harmony between party and local bureaucracy. It was clear that during the party state unification, the party was far away from operating as a two-way functioning mechanism. Governors and general inspectors who already had huge responsibilities were not successful in maintaining the discipline of local party organizations. Party was increasingly seen as irrelevant by local bureaucracy and ordinary citizens. As a result, it was losing its capacity to propagate the Republican ideals and transmit the voice of the people to the upper echelons of state bureaucracy.

In the face of these problems party and state were separated again on June 7, 1939 and party inspectorship position was restored.[80] However, the restoration of the old system was not backed with a definitive regulation that would prevent attempts of party cadres to influence the state. Much like the pre-union period, respected and influential head of local party organizations had a potential to pose a threat to the authority of governors. Administrative ambiguity continued to persist between party cadres and state bureaucracy's mutual spheres of influence. In addition to this, three years of party-state union experience had put an effect on the mentality of actors taking part in state bureaucracy or party cadres. For state officials in the last three years party was just an obsolete institution with no visible power at all. On the other hand, newly appointed party inspectors were filled with ambition to restore the party as two-way functioning mechanism. They were aiming to push the limits of party's autonomy in order to establish it as a third party in state-society relationship which ordinary citizens could take refuge when they were faced with corrupt local state officials. In this environment harmony between

[79] Ibid., 277.
[80] Murat Turan, "Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin," 171-172.

party and state cadres at local level became very vulnerable. Small clashes between two sides had a potential to transform into all-out clash to the detriment of ordinary citizens who were dependent on the cooperation between them to have an efficient administration that can undertake large projects which would increase their life standard.

New Erzincan which was designed to provide accommodation to thousands of citizens was one such project that fell victim to the ambiguous nature of the post-unification party-state relations. The dispute between the governor of Erzincan and the coalition composed of leader of the local party organization and party inspector got out of control and developed into a vicious struggle. In the face of this clash upper institutions refrained from intervening directly by producing a binding decision which would put an end to the conflict. As a result the tension continued to increase and last remnants of the bonds that connected the local party organization and local administration ceased to exist. For the restoration of the lost harmony, the governor who was the primary promoter of the New Erzincan project at the local level was changed. Combined with the reluctance of the Saraçoğlu government to continue to give economic support, New Erzincan project eventually lost its momentum and could not fully materialize.

2.Party Inspector-Altınok Family Alliance

Balıkesir Deputy Muzaffer Akpınar was appointed as party inspector of Erzincan province and arrived at the city of Erzincan on October 1939.[81] Without losing time, he immediately started to conduct a comprehensive inspection tour which was exceeding the boundaries of the central district. Like many other post-unification party inspectors Akpınar was filled with enthusiasm to revitalize the rusted local party organizations and reconstitute

[81] BCA.490.01.646.142.1.19.

them as efficient two-way functioning mechanism that transmitted the discontent of people to the state bureaucracy and propagate the republican ideals. Within a short period of time he visited each district of Erzincan and sent his first report to party headquarters on December 28, 1939.[82]

Dynamism and demanding character of a newly appointed party inspector which was typical for the post-unification era radiated from this report. Akpınar declared that his initial principle had been strengthening the party from periphery to the center which envisioned a party organization that would work like a missionary organization.[83] However, he observed that provincial party organization and local party organizations of the districts of Erzincan were devoid of the necessary discipline to operate based on this principle.[84] Connection between provincial party organization and district organizations was virtually absent, district congresses were not being organized on time, weekly meetings were not taking place, records were not being kept and local party officials' knowledge regarding the code of party was extremely scarce.[85] In the face of this deep-seated inertia which was spreading to the districts from the provincial center, first measure taken by Akpınar was changing the provincial board of administration (il yönetim kurulu).[86]

Akpınar's plan to bring dynamism to the provincial party organization intersected with the desire of Altınok family to regain the control of it. This family was by far the most powerful family in the political life of Erzincan during the Republican era. Hakkı Altınok had been holding the post of mayor uninterruptedly since 1924. Using municipality as a stepping stone

[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid., 20.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid., 19.
[86] Ibid., 20.

Altınok family had managed to extend its influence to the provincial party organization. Their power network had grown to such an extent that in one of his reports party inspector Ragıp Akça informed party secretariat about Altınoks' monopolization of important positions.[87] This report was heavily scrutinized in party's general board of administration (Genel Yönetim Kurulu) and in 1936 general secretary Recep Peker has written a letter to provincial party organization, warning local party officials about the dangers posed by a single family's hegemony to the credibility of party in the eyes of citizens.[88] However, this formal warning was not followed by tangible sanctions against Altınok family.

Peker's letter demonstrates the scale of the incontestable dominance that had been established by Altınok family in the political life of Erzincan. Paraphrasing Akça, Peker stated that "five out of eight members of provincial board of administration were members of Altınok family."[89] Whole municipality staff including the municipal council was composed of members of this family and people close to them.[90] Mayor Hakkı Altınok who was also a member of party's provincial board of administration "has done almost nothing to foster city's prosperity" and this was creating a general discontent among the citizens.[91] Moreover, Akça had managed to detect that pressure from the center was clearly visible in the election of deputies from districts (ilçe) who would attend the provincial congress. He documented that most of these "elected" deputies were either relatives of Altınoks or they had close with them.[92] It was a common practice for the provincial board of administration to send lists to the neighborhood

[87] BCA.490.01.647.150.1.1,4.
[88] Ibid., 4.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.
[92] Ibid., 3.

congresses (ocak kongreleri) in the central district and make listed people get elected as deputies.[93]

Unification of party and state damaged the control of Altınok family over the provincial board of administration. Head of provincial party organization Mustafa Altınok was forced to leave his post to the governor. He instead became the director of city's People's House which was not fully active with all of its branches due to the absence of a People's House building.[94] After three years; the end of unification of party and state was interpreted as an opportunity by Altınok family to regain control in the board. Some members of the family such as Mustafa Altınok even saw the restoration of the old order as a chance to extend their power beyond the provincial level. He wrote a petition to general secretary and asked to be appointed as a party inspector.[95] His petition was rejected on the grounds that party inspectors would be chosen exclusively from deputies in General Assembly.[96] However, Altınok family became successful at the local level and they managed to make a member of the family, Rıza Altınok, the head of provincial party organization. Newly appointed party inspector Muzaffer Akpınar was directly involved in this process and actively supported Rıza Altınok at the expense of violating the same party code that he was assigned to supervise in the first place, thereby failing to implement the code on the ground.

According to the new party code of 1939, members and head of the provincial boards of management were supposed to be elected in provincial congresses.[97] After the end of party-state unification, the general secretary of the RPP issued a declaration that the election of new

[93] Ibid.
[94] BCA.490.01.646.145.1.9.
[95] BCA.490.01.646.142.1.84.
[96] Ibid., 83.
[97] *CHP Nizamnamesi* (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1939), 21.

heads of provincial party organizations should take place immediately after the arrival of party inspectors to their provinces.[98] However, no provincial congress took place in 1939 after the arrival of Muzaffer Akpınar and Rıza Altınok became the leader of provincial party organization without getting elected. Akpınar stated in his first report that he personally "chose the head of provincial party organization and deputy chairman."[99] He tried to legitimize his explicit breach of the party code by claiming that as a result of his decision "bad impression created by monopolization (inhisarcılık) seemed to disappear in the minds of people, gossips ended and sympathy towards the party increased."[100] Considering the fact that Altınok family was still in charge of the municipality when Akpınar has written this report, his claims seem ill-founded. This breach of the party code was not investigated and punished by the party secretariat. Nevertheless, it clearly shows the strong nature of the alliance between Akpınar and Altınok family that led newly appointed party inspector to risk a potential hostile reaction from the party secretariat by violating clearly stated procedural norms.

By the end of 1939 Altınok family seemed to achieve success in restoring their pre-unification monopoly in the political life of Erzincan and they managed to form an alliance with the newly appointed party inspector — a coalition that they had failed to accomplish before the unification. However, this success was cut short and Altınok family's monopoly was shaken to the core by the earthquake which initiated a series of event that put an end to Hakkı Altınok's long reign as the mayor of Erzincan. He was replaced by a new governor-mayor named Sükuti Tükel who was equipped with extraordinary powers to lead the province in the extraordinary conditions created by the earthquake.

[98] Murat Turan, Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi'nin, 172.
[99] BCA.490.01.646.142.1.20.
[100] Ibid.

3. The Earthquake and Sükuti Tükel's Background

Erzincan was hit by a massive earthquake on December 27, 1939 at 1.57 am. Its magnitude was 7.8 M_w and its intensity was 12; the maximum on Mercalli Intensity scale.[101] 9,189 people have died and 6,601 buildings were destroyed in the city alone.[102] Heavy number of casualties were further increased by the cold weather and heavy blizzard that caused felt temperature to fall as low as -35°C.[103] Since the roads were already impassable due to heavy snow, city was totally dependent on railroad to receive aid.[104] After the railroads were repaired first train could arrive in Erzincan almost 24 hours after the earthquake.[105] Tents, clothes, bread, food items, medical equipment and staff were brought to the city and wounded people were transported by the same trains to neighboring provinces such as Malatya Elazığ and Diyarbakır because city's hospital was destroyed as well like many other public buildings.[106] On December 29 a first aid hospital which had a capacity of 300 beds reached to Erzincan by train and aid committees were started to be established all over the country to help Erzincan.[107] Prime minister ordered governors of the neighboring provinces to immediately send their surplus food items to Erzincan.[108] Also interior minister signed a decree to ensure the transportation of families who could not be accommodated in Erzincan to the towns and villages which were less affected from the earthquake.[109] Government planned to transfer 1,500 citizens who have been left homeless to Divriği, 1,000 to Kayseri and 1,000 of them to Sivas within a short period of

[101] İlhan Haçin, "1939 Büyük Erzincan Depremi," *Atatürk Araştırma Dergisi Merkezi Dergisi* 30, no. 88 (2014): 40.
[102] Erdem Yavuz, 1939 Depremi, 33.
[103] İlhan Haçin, 1939 Büyük Erzincan Depremi, 41.
[104] Fatih Tuğluoğlu, "1939 Büyük Anadolu Zelzelesi ve Erzincan Vilayetinde Yardım Falliyetleri," *International Journal of History* 7, no. 4 (2015): 116.
[105] Erdem Yavuz, 1939 Depremi, 25.
[106] Ibid., 29.
[107] Fatih Tuğluoğlu, 1939 Büyük Anadolu Zelzelesi, 117. Ibid., 28.
[108] Ibid., 118.
[109] Erdem Yavuz, 1939 Depremi, 29.

time.[110] However, the number of people who were sent to other provinces continued to increase because of the terrible living conditions that emerged in the city after the earthquake due to the lack of housing and adequate medical facilities to sustain a large population. Citizens were temporarily sent to diverse parts of the country such as İstanbul, Adana, İzmir, Adapazarı, Adana, Mersin, Hatay, Maraş, Gaziantep, Giresun and Balıkesir.[111]

The city of Erzincan was the most severely hit settlement in the country but many other provinces were affected by the earthquake as well; that is why all the needs of Erzincan could not be met quickly. Problem of food provision was solved within few days; on December 30 two mobile ovens which had a capacity to bake 4200 loafs of bread were sent to Erzincan.[112] Later with the directives of deputies, Mersin, Adana, Malatya, Elazığ, Diyarbakır, Kayseri, Hatay and Sivas governorates started to send 20000 loafs of bread per day and other food items to the city of Erzincan.[113] However, provision of tents, clothing and fuel remained to be a problem for a long time. All citizens remaining in Erzincan could be accommodated in tents as late as one month after the disaster.[114]

During this one month period people tried to survive in the most primitive conditions. Due to the freezing temperatures water sources were frozen and even finding drinking water became a huge problem.[115] People tried to protect themselves from low temperatures by burning pieces of wood that they have found in rubbles and they wrapped their feet with pieces of nylon and paper against frostbite.[116] After one month all families were sheltered either under the tents

[110] İlhan Haçin, 1939 Büyük Erzincan Depremi, 42.
[111] Fatih Tuğluoğlu, 1939 Büyük Anadolu Zelzelesi, 131.
[112] Ibid., 119.
[113] İlhan Haçin, 1939 Büyük Erzincan Depremi, 53.
[114] Erdem Yavuz, 1939 Depremi, 30.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Ibid.

given by the Red Crescent or primitive huts that they have erected on their own by using the materials left from destroyed buildings.[117] Combined with the field hospital and a soup kitchen founded by Red Crescent these elements constituted the nucleus of the settlement which would be named as temporary city (muvakkat şehir).[118] Efforts to remove dead bodies and debris continued until the beginning of spring and life in Erzincan slowly got stabilized as the prohibition on entrances to the city which had been promulgated by council of ministers on January 3 was lifted.[119]

At the end of the spring Sükuti Tükel was appointed as the new governor of Erzincan who would lead the city of Erzincan in its reconstruction. The new governor was also given the control of the municipality of the city, taking the post away from the hands of Altınok family. When he came to Erzincan on June 1, 1940 he saw that the city was only a shadow of its former self.[120] Its population which had been 16,144 in the census of 1935 was reduced to 2,500 people after the earthquake due to deaths and temporary transfer of most of the citizens to other provinces.[121] State was present with 39 portable sheds which were being used as government offices.[122] Civil servants were residing in undestroyed buildings in villages and commerce was limited to few number of shops built by some local merchants.[123]

Tükel as the new governor-mayor of Erzincan was assigned with the arduous task of "reconstructing the city, bringing prosperity to its citizens, keeping the promise that government

[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid., 29.
[120] Sükuti Tükel, *Yeni Erzincan: Nasıl Kuruldu ve Niçin Bitirilemedi* (İzmir: Piyasa Matbaası, 1949), 7.
[121] Erdem Yavuz, 1939 Depremi, 37.
[122] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 9.
[123] Ibid.

had made to the citizens in short… founding a civilized city in the East."[124] He was chosen for such demanding posts because of the great successes he had shown as the mayor of Maraş in carrying out large infrastructure projects that "had transformed Maraş from a medieval settlement into a modern city."[125] Interestingly Tükel's political life was limited with just his six-year term as the mayor of Maraş between 1933 and 1939. He had neither been involved in active politics nor held an administrative position before.

Tükel was born in Trabzon and his family had a humble background.[126] Finishing high school in the same city he went to Istanbul to get higher education and got graduated from the military medical academy.[127] He worked as an army doctor during the Balkan Wars in Edirne then he was sent to Çanakkale, Galicia and Palestine during the Great War.[128] After the armistice, he was appointed as the head doctor of Izmir Hospital but after the invasion of Izmir he resigned from this post as an act of protest against the Istanbul government.[129] He joined the Izmir branch of the intelligence network led by Hüseyin Fehmi Bey.[130] This small branch managed to steal invasion plans of the Greek army with the help of Italians and smuggled Italian weapons for the National Army.[131] Tükel was sent to Rome by the general staff of the National Army to accomplish this operation and by using a middleman he succeeded in transporting the weapons offered by a retired Italian general to Anatolia.[132] After the end of National Liberation

[124] Sükuti Tükel, *Tatlı ve Acı Hatıralar* (İzmir: Piyasa Matbaası, 1953), 18. "…zelzeleden yıkılan Erzincan şehrinin yeniden kurulması, halkının refaha ulaştırılması, hükumetin millete karşı yaptığı vaadin yerine getirilmesi, hülasa… Şark'ta medeni bir şehir tesisi gayesiyle Erzincan vali ve belediye reisliğine gönderildim."
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid., 10.
[127] Ibid., 11.
[128] Ibid., 12.
[129] Ibid., 13.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.

War Tükel remained in İzmir and worked as a doctor in his private clinic.[133] After his retirement he started to write books and publish articles on local newspapers which were didactic in nature.[134] He took an active role in civil organizations and became one of the founders of "fight against tuberculosis organization" (veremle mücadele cemiyeti) and started to work in İzmir branch of the Red Crescent.[135] His extraordinary energy and great services that he made in Torbalı Earthquake and Izmir flood as a Red Crescent member caught the attention of government and eventually he was appointed as the mayor of Maraş in 1933.[136]

In his memoirs Tükel has drawn a dismal portrait of the city which he had arrived. "Maraş was crippling in a medieval life, Republic had not managed to leave neither social nor a civilized presence in the city unlike other parts of the motherland" wrote Tükel. Even though the city had rich water sources in its periphery, ordinary citizens could not benefit from them. They were monopolized by a handful of wealthy and influential families who had brought water to their own households by laying pipes. However, ordinary citizens were dependent on insufficient number of fountains in their neighborhoods before which they queued up for hours to get few liters of water. Maraş was located on three hills, in the absence of a sewage system rainwater and wastewater from households were flowing to the streams which encircled the city. Toxic gases were being released from them that polluted the air in the city and pathways around them which were the only ways to enter the city were getting covered with excrement, creating major health risks. The city did not have an efficient system of waste management garbage was being thrown out to alleys and it was being collected by five donkeys which carried two large chests. The city did not have a fire department even tough majority of the buildings

[133] Ibid., 16.
[134] Ibid., 17.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.

were made out of wood. Maraş was poorly lighted at night and it was nearly impossible for citizens to pass through the poorly paved roads and alleys which were filled with holes at nighttime. City had a centuries old cemetery which remained in ruins over time. It was common to see wolves, dogs and other animal herds traversing it and defiling graves. Bakers were plenty but they were far from meeting the hygiene standards. There was not a single park, theatre or cinema in the city.[137]

[137] Ibid., 89-90. "*Maraş bir Orta Çağ hayatı içinde çalkalanıyordu. On, on beş senelik Cumhuriyet burada ne içtimai ne de medeni bir varlık gösterememişti. Diğer vatan parçalarında olduğu gibi…Maraş bol su veren tabii kaynaklara malikti. Bu kaynaklar da şehrin hemen baş ucunda idi. Fakat vaktiyle teşekkül eden nüfuzlu sahibi bir grup ve bu gruba intisapla fahir duyan kimseler bu menbaları adeta tasarrufları altına almışlar münhasıran kendi evlerine kadar toprak künkler tefriş ettirerek ve lüle hesabiyle de taksimata tabi tutarak bu sulardan birçok halkı mahrum bırakmışlardı. Halbuki beri tarafta halkın büyük bir kısmı susuzluktan kıvrım kıvrım kıvranıyorlardı. Gerçi muayyen bazı mahallelerde lütfen birer çeşme vücuda getirmişlerdi. Lakin bu çeşmelerden akan sular bir iki lüleye inhisar ediyordu, mahalle halkının ihtiyaçlarını asla tatmin edemiyordu. Bu çeşmelerin başlarında, evinde işlerini, kocalarını ve çocuklarını bırakarak bir satır su alabilmek için sabahlara kadar bekleyen hatta inleyen kadınlar görülüyordu… Maraş başlıca üç tepenin üzerine kurulmuş bir şehirdir. Bu tepelerin eteklerinin birleştiği yerlerde husule gelen derelerden şehre hariçten giren ve yağmurdan hasıl olan sular aktığı gibi evlerin lağımlarını yıkayan sular da bu derelere akardı. Bu lağım suları görünüşte berraktı fakat muhtelif zehirleyici gazları hamildi. Bu gazlar şehrin havasına yayılarak havanın safiyetini ihlal ettiği gibi derelerin müsamahasından teşekkül eden patikalardan geçmeğe mecbur insanların da sıhhatlerini tırmalıyordu. Bu patikalar da şehrin yegane yollarıydı… Halk meskenlerinin muzehrafatını sokağa atarlardı. Bunların sokaklardan nakilleri münhasıran beş merkebin sağına ve soluna asılan tahta sandıklarla yapılırdı… Maraş serapa ahşap evlerle dolu idi. Fakat yangın söndürme teşkilatından mahrumdu… Maraş medeni tenvir vasıtasından mahrum olduğu için geceleri kamil bir karanlık içinde kalırdı. Gerçe köşe başlarında belediye tarafından yaktırılan beş numaralı lambalar vardı. Fakat bunların ışıkları sığındıkları fenerlerin tozlu camları içinde sanki esaret hayatı geçirirlerdi. Bunlar ancak sönük bir yıldız mahiyetinde kalarak yalnız istikametlerin tayinine yarardı. Geceleri intizamsız ve sularla dolu çukurları bulunan sokaklarından insanlar geçemezdi. Komşuluklar kafileler halinde ve ellerde taşınan çıraların alevlerinin delaletiyle yapılırdı. Hele metruk mezarlıkların yanlarından geçmek korkulu bir hal alırdı, ruhlarda haşyetler vücuda getirirdi… Maraş asırlardan intikal eden bir mezarlığa malikti. Fakat burası hayvan sürülerinin adeta cevelangahı idi. Kış zamanlarında kurtlar alelade zamanlarda ise köpekler bu mukaddes yer, manevi varlık alemini temsil eden sahalarda bir takım kazıntılar vücuda getirirlerdi… Maraş'ta ekmek pişiren fırınlar çoktu, fakat hamurları sıhhi olmayan şekillerde yoğrulduğu gibi, ekmeklerin satışa arzedildiği sedler üzerinde de fırıncılar ya ayakkabılarıyla veya kirli ayaklarıyla gezerlerdi… Maraş ne umumi parklara ne çocuk bahçelerine ve ne de ruhlara neşeler ve zevkler fikirlere inkişaf verecek bir sinema ve tiyatro binasına malik değildi."*

Almost all of these problems were solved within Tükel's six-year term. Stinking streams were covered with stone-brick vaults and turned into paved boulevards decorated with trees. Zoning plan of the city was drawn and narrow streets were widened. A hydroelectric plant was constructed and water began to be transported to the city in higher amounts and distributed to every corner of the city by several automated fountains. A modern cemetery was built and a "martyr monument" was erected at the middle of it under which bones of the local heroes who had taken part in the national resistance were buried in separate bags. Many other monuments were put in various neighborhoods to commemorate local heroes and highlight the "heroic" character of the city. In addition to these many parks a public bath and theater-cinema building were constructed.[138]

This success caught the attention of government and it played a key role in his appointment to Erzincan as the new governor-mayor in order to fulfill the objective of "founding a civilized city in the East". However, Tükel's term in Maraş was not just an opportunity for him to prove himself as an efficient administrator. It was also a chance to acquaint himself with the dynamics of politics at the local level. During the first years of his term, he had witnessed a vicious struggle between the local powerful families for the control of provincial party organization. However, by 1936 this fierce political struggle left its place to the peaceful environment brought by the unification of party and state which put the governor in charge of the provincial party organization.

The staggering contrast in the political atmosphere between two halves of his term might have put an impact on his perception of provincial party organization's function in political life at the local level. It might have raised some doubts in his mind about this institution's

[138] Ibid., 93-94.

usefulness, in other words its capability in meeting its primary objectives which were to propagate republican values and collecting demands-complaints of people. It would be reasonable to assume that his observations in Maraş, later impacted the attitude he has taken as the head of the local bureaucracy, in his relation with the provincial party organization of Erzincan.

Tükel replaced Tevfik Kadıoğlu when he was appointed as the mayor of Maraş back in 1933. Kadıoğlu was a member of the Kadızade family which had a monopoly over the political life in Maraş. In addition to municipality the provincial party organization was controlled by them and a member of the family was a deputy in the Grand National Assembly.[139] Kadızades had managed to gain disproportionate amount of political influence over time at the expense of other strong families in the city.[140] Not surprisingly, as soon as Kadızades lost the control of municipality after the appointment of Tükel, their political monopoly was started to be heavily contested by these families.

Gaining the control of provincial party organization led by Ziya Kadıoğlu became the primary objective of the opposition against Kadızades. The opposition was organized under an organization called "Maraş Gençlerbirliği" (Maraş Youth Union) which attracted 93 members.[141] In an environment where almost all civil organizations were being closed across the country Youth Union was defined by its leader Ata Bey as a harmless initiative to gather youth together until the establishment of a Public House in the city.[142] However, it was essentially a pressure group against Kadızades. They started to make propaganda by publishing

[139] Tülay Aydın, "Tek Parti Döneminde," 261.
[140] Ibid., 260.
[141] Ibid., 262.
[142] Ibid., 263.

a newspaper called “Yeni Maraş” in which they kept claiming that elections within the provincial party organization were rigged.[143] Board of administration of the provincial party organization resigned due to their pressures but Ziya Kadıoğlu continued to keep his post.[144] At the same time Youth Union managed to persuade party inspector Ahmet Hamdi Dikmen and made him join their coalition against Kadızades. In their talks with the party inspector members of the Youth Union claimed that their organization was not against the party on the contrary they were willing to join the party but Ziya Kadıoğlu was seeing them as a threat and not accepting them as members.[145]

Party inspector Dikmen reflected the discontent of the opposition in his reports and wrote that people who administer the local party organization used party’s power for their own benefit rather than spreading party’s ideology.[146] Apparently Kadızades were controlling the canals which were bringing water to paddy fields and forcing peasants to pay in order to use them.[147]They were using their influence to depose any civil servant who attempted to defy their maltreatment of people.[148] Dikmen also claimed that Ziya Kadıoğlu did not have the intellectual capacity to propagate Republican ideals as a rich farmer with a primary school degree.[149] Underlining the fact that there was no one in Maraş competent enough for this post; he demanded from the party secretariat an appointment outside of Maraş.[150]

[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Ibid.
[146] Ibid., 261.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid., 262.
[149] Ibid., 260.
[150] Ibid., 263.

Party secretariat ordered two of the deputies of Maraş Mehmet Erten and Nuri Ural to write a detailed report on the developments in the city. They reported that due to the disputes between Ziya Kadıoğlu and the opposition serious problems emerged in the city regarding the provision of water.[151] They warned the party secretariat that since new administrative council has not been formed yet, within this political impasse society's trust to the state was diminishing.[152] According to deputies party organization in Maraş was one the verge of collapse and worrying rumors were spreading in the city about an assassination attempt organized by Ziya Bey to kill Şükrü Bey, member of another powerful family in Maraş called Beyazıtzades.[153]

In the face of these developments Burdur deputy Halit Bey was appointed as the head of provincial party organization in Maraş by the party secretary Recep Peker.[154] New board of administration was formed in which prominent members of the opposition such as Ata Bey and Durgut Bey found place. Ziya Kadıoğlu continued to be a member of the council but due to his dispute with the council members from the opposition, he did not attend the meetings of the council therefore he was evicted due to his perpetual inattendance.[155] New party inspector Şevket Ödül reported that Kadızades' influence in the municipality and provincial party organization has finally ended but new people who filled the empty seats were chosen based on their membership to the anti-Kadızade coalition, not based on their merits.[156] According to Ödül, seventy five years old leader of the Youth League Ata Bey was just a greedy-aggressive

[151] Ibid., 264.
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid., 266.
[155] Ibid., 267.
[156] Ibid., 268.

old man and his companion in the council Durgut Bey was just an ignorant man who stupidly prided himself on his role in ousting Kadızades.[157]

Soon after, the unification of party and state was declared and the governor became the leader of provincial party organization. This put an end to the political turmoil that has been distracting the whole city for a long time. In the second half of his term, Tükel managed to end most of the problems of the city including the water provision. There was clearly a dichotomy between his efficient administration that solved people's problems and the useless provincial party organization which was filled with incompetent local elites who were only concerned about using the power that they have derived from the party for their own benefit, remaining totally aloof to people's concerns. Administered by them, provincial party organization has been far from fulfilling its fundamental objectives which were propagating republican ideals and hearing the discontents of people.

It would not be unreasonable to say that Tükel's observations in Maraş might have helped him to an antipathy towards the provincial party organization as an institution in and of itself. Furthermore, when he was appointed to Erzincan, his former experiences with the incompetent self-serving local elites that controlled the local party organization in Maraş, might have led him to assume a cynical attitude vis-a-vis Rıza Altınok who was a member of the most powerful family in the city. This cynicism had a potential to transform into an obstacle that could prevent him from cultivating the necessary mutual trust between himself and Altınok which would have been instrumental in laying the foundations for development of a harmonious relationship between the local bureaucracy and local party organization. In an environment of

[157] Ibid.

distrust, disagreements had a potential to turn into all out conflicts which was what happened during his term in Erzincan.

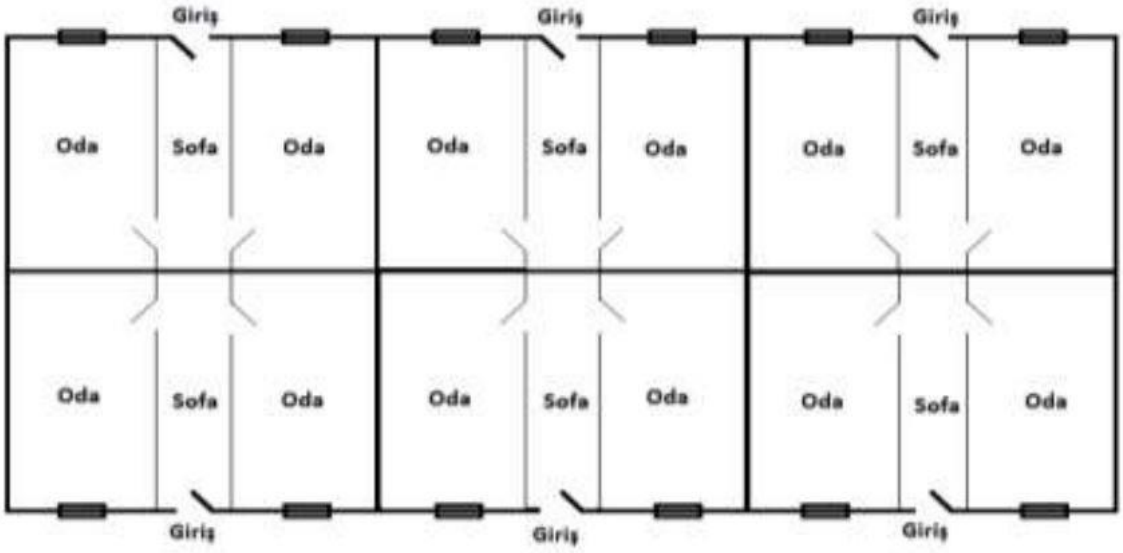
4. Early Construction Activities in the City and Emergence of New Erzincan Project

Two weeks after his arrival Tükel was assigned with his first major task by the government. On July 15, 1940 the prime minister informed him about the decision of council of ministers on the return of citizens who were temporarily settled in other provinces back to Erzincan. Tükel was ordered to make the necessary preparations in the city for their return. Tükel immediately ordered 1,500 tents. After a week they were sent by the Red Crescent. They were erected in a neighborhood plan, water was brought and toilets were constructed. After ensuring the most rudimentary livable conditions, citizens were allowed to return back to Erzincan systematically in small groups and a tent was given to each family.[158]

Combined with the citizens who had already been living in Erzincan after the earthquake, number of people residing in tents has increased tremendously. Despite the measures taken in the summer to increase the level of living standards; surviving the winter in these large neighborhoods composed of tents would be highly untenable. Tents were surrounded by muddy and hardly lighted alleys and were exposed to cold.[159] As their numbers were increasing, provision of necessary fuel to properly heat them in winter would be a big logistical problem. Recognizing these hardships Tükel's main objective became reducing the

[158] Sükuti Tükel, "Yeni Erzincan," 9.
[159] Erol Kaya, *Şehre Tanıklık Edenler Erzincan Sözlü Tarih Çalışması* (Istanbul: Erzincan Binali Yıldırım Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2012), 346.

number of tents by sheltering as much people as possible in temporary houses by the beginning of winter.[160]



Plan of a twelve-roomed pavyon[161]

An architect and an engineer were sent from Ankara, immediately the site of construction was determined and a plan was drawn for the neighborhood which would be composed of blocks of temporary houses. These temporary houses which would later be named as "pavyons" were primitive dwellings which could be built in short time thanks to their simple and adobe based design which limited the need for deployment of construction materials outside of the province.[162] Each house was essentially a block composed of six subsections which had two rooms separated by a corridor.[163]

Within three months 90 pavyons were constructed before the winter. This construction was financed from the donations raised by the Red Crescent; hence the neighborhood was

[160] Sükuti Tükel, "Yeni Erzincan," 9.
[161] Ibid.
[162] Fatih Orhan, "Depremin Erzincan," 349.
[163] Ibid., 348.

named as Kızılay neighborhood.[164] A room was assigned to each family and 1080 of them were sheltered in these houses, considering the average family size of the time approximately 6,000 people were accommodated in them.[165] Obviously the living conditions were very poor in these packed rooms which did not have the necessary privacy and hygiene standards.[166] However, these houses were considered as temporary dwellings. Citizens would live under these conditions until the construction of the new city. After the construction of the new city, these houses would be leased to the poorest families who would not be able to afford to buy a house in the new city.[167]

The construction of Kızılay neighborhood resonated in the upper circles of government as the first large-scale achievement recorded in Erzincan under Tükel's administration. As a result of his success in finishing the construction "in record time" before winter, prime minister Refik Saydam congratulated Tükel by a telegram on December 22 1940. On the same day the provincial party congress took place in the city.[168] It was attended by both Tükel and party inspector Muzaffer Akpınar who had been busy since September with carrying out his inspections which had been interrupted by the earthquake.[169] Acting in accordance with his objective of "strengthening the party from periphery to the center" which he had declared in his first report, Akpınar went to all districts of Erzincan, took measures to increase the discipline of local party branches by instructing them about the new party code, urging them to make weekly meetings, keep better records of financial matters etc. He personally attended and observed all district congresses.[170]

[164] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 14.
[165] Ibid., 11.
[166] BCA.490.01.647.148.1.96.
[167] Ibid., 15.
[168] BCA.490.01.1536.241.1.129.
[169] BCA.490.01.646.142.1.65.
[170] BCA.490.01.273.1092.1.42.

The provincial congress was the platform which he would reap the fruits of his hard work in reinvigorating local party branches. Since this was the first provincial congress held in Erzincan after the end of unification of party and state, Akpınar led the congress as the party inspector.[171] All districts sent their deputies, petitions were read out loud, complaints were declared and bureaucrats answered to these complaints one by one.[172] In addition to lively exchanges between deputies and bureaucrats, Akpınar and Tükel's attendance showed everyone that cooperation between state bureaucracy and party cadres would continue in the new era despite the end of unification of state and party.[173] However, in the records of the congress the signs of confusion among the deputies regarding the party-state relations in this new era were visible. For example, a deputy who overly rejoiced "to witness such a high level of sincerity in a provincial congress" declared that he saw this as a reflection of "merging of party and state into each other as an indivisible unit", erroneously using a common phrase that had been used during the period of party-state unification.[174]

Not surprisingly most of the petitions handed in to the provincial congress by the deputies of the central district were related with the issues concerning ministry of public works. Villagers demanded the continuation of the infrastructure project in the Erzincan Plain by draining new swamps, building new irrigation canals etc.[175] On the other hand inhabitants of the city of Erzincan were seeking help of the government in constructing new houses. Underlining the disastrous effect of the earthquake that left them destitute, they demanded fiscal help to construct their new houses on their own or establishment of a cooperative by the state

[171] *CHP Teftiş Talimatnamesi* (Ankara: Ulus Basımevi, 1939), 4.
[172] BCA.490.01.1536.241.1.138.
[173] Ibid., 137-138.
[174] Ibid., 138.
[175] *1940 CHP Kongre Dilekleri* (Ankara: CHP Genel Sekreterliği Neşriyatı, 1941), 246.

which would undertake the construction of new houses and enable citizens to buy them through long-term loan.[176] Ministry of public works responded this petition negatively, stating that:

> Construction of a new city requires a very high budget and due to the problems in the provision of construction materials and labor force it is impossible to undertake this major task immediately, in expectation of such a project necessary measures were taken to temporarily settle the citizens.[177]

This answer suggests that until the end of 1940 a concrete plan for building a new city had not emerged yet but there was an expectation of it. Political will shown by the Saydam government in support of the construction of a new city played a key role in fulfillment of this expectation.

One week after the provincial congress Tükel was called to Ankara by prime minister Refik Saydam. They held a one-to-one meeting in which after declaring to Tükel that he would continue to keep him in Erzincan until the construction of a "perfect exemplary city", prime minister asked him about what would be his next steps to achieve this objective.[178] Tükel stated that neither existing aids nor citizens' economic strength were enough to construct a new city; only by a long term fiscal aid, government's desire could possibly be achieved in short time.[179] Prime minister reacted positively to this proposal and ordered Tükel to come up with a concrete project to receive the necessary governmental aid. Tükel found support from the minister of interior Faik Öztrak too. Öztrak declared that he will help him by all means in the construction of New Erzincan.[180] Tükel concluded his Ankara tour by visiting the head of earthquake commission Vehbi Demirel. This commission was equipped with a budget worth five million

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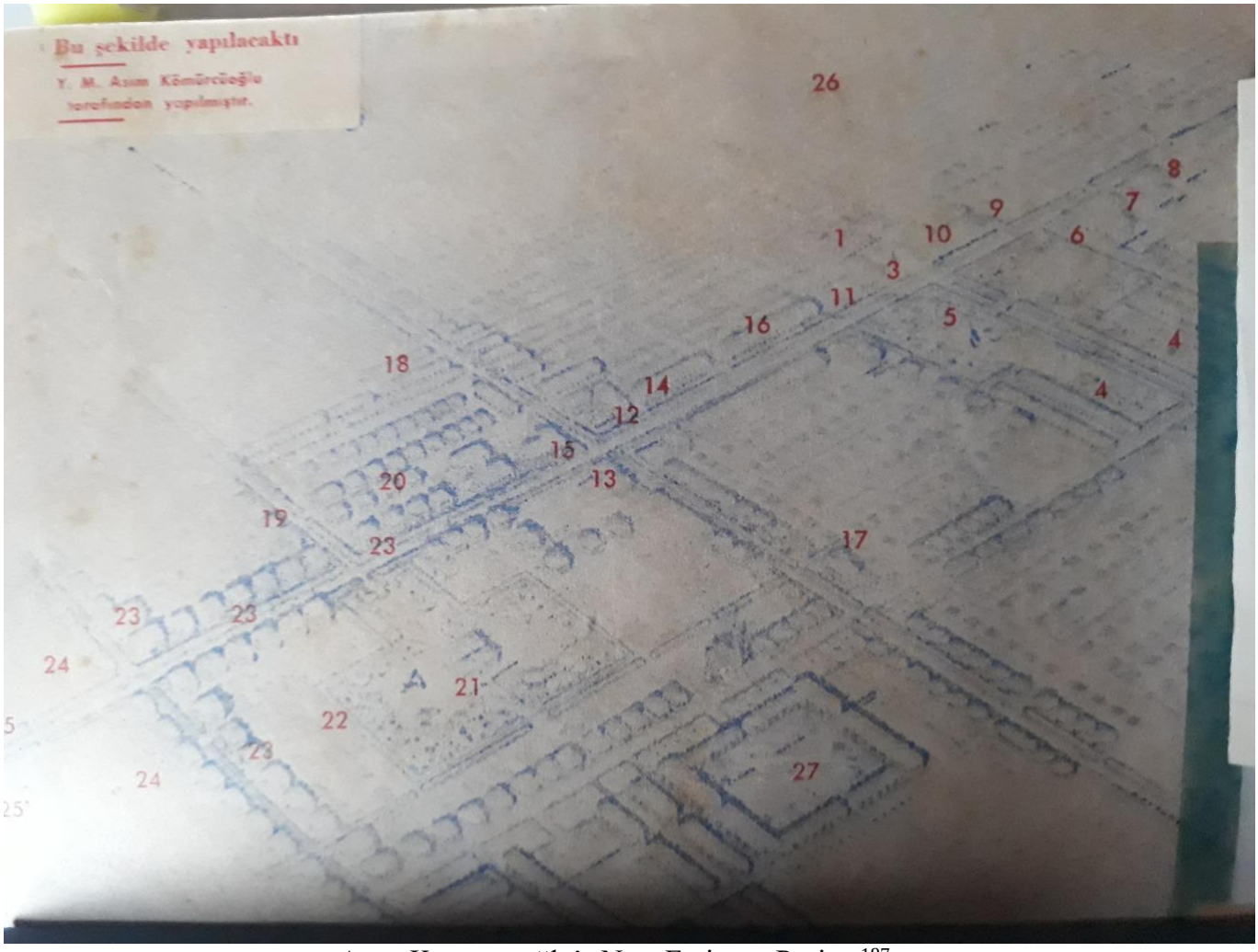
[176] Ibid., 247.
[177] Ibid. "*Zelzeleden harap olan Erzincan şehrinin yeni plana göre tesisi çok büyük mebaliğe ihtiyaç göstermektedir. Umumi vaziyeti hazıra dolayısıyla, malzeme ve işçi tedarikinde maruz kalınan müşkülat sebebiyle, bu işe derhal teşebbüse imkan görülmemektedir. Ancak bu imkanın husülüne intizaren zelzele mıntakası olan havali sekenesinin muvakkaten yerleştirilmesi için bilmum tedbirler alınmış bulunmaktadır.*"
[178] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 28.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid., 27.

lira which was allocated on June 3, 1940. Demirel informed Tükel that the commission has decided to provide the necessary funding for the construction of some buildings in Erzincan which included government building (hükumet konağı), municipality building, a well-equipped primary school, gas house and steam house.[181] Tükel added some of the much-needed buildings in other districts of Erzincan to the list and in short time the necessary funding was transferred to the municipality of Erzincan.[182]

Within next four months, the zoning plan of New Erzincan was drawn alongside with the projects of water, electricity and sewage systems. According to these projects water would be brought to the city from an underground water source called Kuru Telek and electricity would be produced by building a hydroelectric power plant on Girlevik waterfall.[183] The plan of the sewage system was produced by a committee of experts sent by the ministry of public works.[184] Zoning plan of the new city was drawn by architect Asım Kömürcüoğlu who had received his education in Germany as an expert on urban planning. He has also drawn the plans of the public utility facilities and designs of house types which would be built for ordinary citizens.[185] By the end of April 1941 Kömürcüoğlu informed Tükel by a telegram that zoning plans of New Erzincan, plans of houses and public utility facilities were ready alongside with the infrastructure projects.[186]

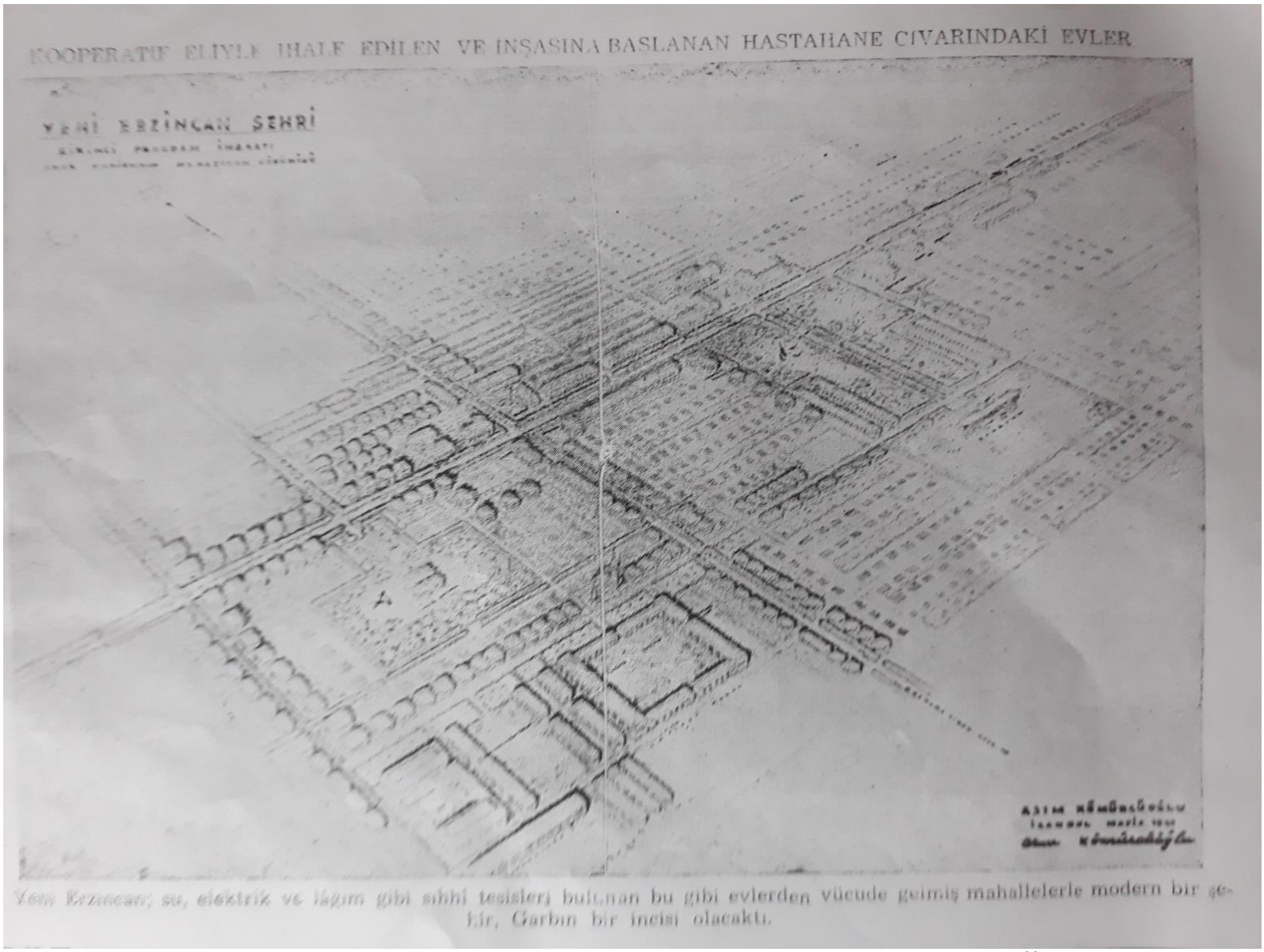
[181] Ibid.,28.
[182] Ibid.
[183] Ibid., 29.
[184] Ibid., 30.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.

Kömürcuoğlu's New Erzincan as described by Tükel resembled a human body which lies on the Erzincan-Trabzon street and stretches his arms perpendicular to it:



Asım Kömürcüoğlu's New Erzincan Project[187]

[187] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 109-100. "*1- Government Building, 2- Stadium, 3- Republic Square and Monument, 4- Park, 5- Library, 6- Public House, 7- Army House, 8- Inspectorship Office, 9- Agriculture Bank, 10- Post Office, 11- Tekel Building, 12- Municipality, 13- Mosque, 14- Bathhouse, 15- Restaurant-Hotel, 16- Block Houses, 17- Primary School, 18- Kızılay Neighbourhood (90) Pavyons, 19- Civil Servant Apartment Buildings, 20- Municipality Market, 21- Hospital, 22- Steam House, 23- One-Two Storey Houses, 24- Technical Schools, 25- Farmers Neighburhood, 26- Prison, 27- Marketplace*"



Asım Kömürcüoğlu's New Erzincan Project (with a better resolution)[188]

[188] Sükuti Tükel, *Bağımsız Adayın Erzincanlılarla Hasbihali* (İzmir: Piyasa Matbaası, 1948), 12-13.

"…right hand was the governor office (hükumet konağı) representing the state, left hand was the stadium that would ensure the physical and mental development of the youth, to which both the state and government would be entrusted in the future. On the right flank of the Government Boulevard (hükumet bulvarı) which constituted the arms, there was the Republic Square, at the center of it there was a monument which would narrate the catastrophe brought by 1939 Erzincan earthquake and the compassion of the state that followed it. On the left side of the boulevard there were parks and gardens which would give joy and mental ease to the citizens and children. Around the intersection of arms and spine there were economic and cultural institutions which constituted the mind of the body such as: library, People's House, Officers Club (Orduevi), Inspectorship Office (Müfettişlik Dairesi), post office, office of Agricultural Bank. At the lower parts Erzurum-Sivas street vertically dissected the hipbone. Around the intersection point public utility institutions (amme müesselerri) were situated such as the municipality building, mosque, public bath, hotel and restaurants. Alongside this street there was a primary school. Between this street and government boulevard a cinema building was located and on both sides of the Trabzon street there were blocks of houses which had shops on their ground floors. Further south there was another boulevard. On the right tip of it there were Kızılay neighborhood, houses built by Kızılay for civil servants and municipality's market. On the left tip of it a stupendous presence of compassion composed of a hospital with 100 bed capacity and a steam house (tebhirhane) was located. Below this boulevard there were thighs, probably the strongest part of the body, constituted by the lands of the technical and the trade school. Finally, at the feet which would show the strength of the whole body, farmers neighborhood was located (today's temporary city)."[189]

[189] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 42-43. "*…bu ellerden sağının devleti temsil eden hükumet konağını, solunun da devleti ve hükumeti, üzerine titrenen şekliyle, ellerine emanet edeceğimiz gençliğin bedeni ve fikri inkişafını temin edecek stadyomu tuttuğunu ve bu kollar istikametinde açılan 22 metrelik bir bulvarın sağında; Cumhuriyet meydanı ile bunun merkezinde Erzincan felaketini insanlara hikaye ve devlet şefkatini belagatle ifade edecek olan mütevazı bir anıdın, solunda ise halka refah ve çocuklara sevinç ve ruh saadeti verecek parkın ve çocuk bahçelerinin bulunduğunu görürüz. Bu kolların vücudun belkemiği tasavvur edilen Trabzon şosesine yağıştığı noktanın etrafında da; Kütüphane, Halkevi, Orduevi, Müfettişlik dairesi, Postahane, Ziraat bankası, Tekel binası gibi kültürel ve iktisadi müesseselerin yer aldığı nev'ima o vücudun dimağını teşkil ettiği göze çarpar. Daha aşağıda Erzurum-Sivas caddesi bu beşkemiğine amuden geçer. Bunun da telaki noktalarına belediye, cami, hamam, otel, lokanta gibi amme müesseseleri ve daha ilerisinde tam teşkilatlı bir ilkokul binası yerleştirilmiştir. Hükumet bulvarı ile bu şosenin arasında ve Trabzon şosesinin sağında, solunda bulunan arsalarda da altları mağazalardan ibaret blok evlerle sinema binası yer almıştır. Daha aşağıda yine 22 metre genişliğinde diğer bir bulvar mevcuttur ki, bunun d sağ ucunda Kızılay mahallesi (90 pavyon) Kızılay tarafından yaptırılan memur apartmanları ve belediye çarşısı, diğer ucunda da geniş bir arsa içinde vücuda getirilen yüz yataklı hastahane ve bunun yanı başındaki tephirhaneden ibaret heybetli bir şefkat varlığı görülür. Bu teşkilatın daha cenubunda tahminen vücudun en kuvvetli uzvunu teşkil eden baldır kısımlarında da teknik ve sanat okullarına ait saha nihayet vücudun sağlamlığını gösterecek ayak kısmında da çiftçi mahallesi vardır. (Şimdiki muvakkat şehir).*"

Geological-climactic conditions and legal-bureaucratic processes presented real challenges to the realization of the project. These elements affected the behavior of actors involved which in turn shaped the trajectory that construction took in the long run. First of all, due the harsh climate of the Erzincan plain yearly construction period in the city was very short, only limited to the summer months. This reality in itself gave an urgency to the construction effort because inefficient use of summer months would mean loss of an entire year therefore the budget had to be ready long before the beginning of the construction period to systematically deposit the necessary construction materials which would be imported from outside of the province. Due to the ongoing war, emergence of a scarcity in the supply of construction materials was very likely, this made the storage of large amounts of construction material in advance very crucial for the success of the whole project.[190]

Secondly although the site of construction of New Erzincan was at the north of the city closer to the mountains, the advantage gained from building the new city on a relatively more reliable floor would be lost by getting closer to the fault line itself. Therefore construction materials which would be used in new buildings had to be of high quality to render them resistant against a future earthquake. Thirdly for the sake of efficient use of the limited time all buildings had to be constructed at the same time in order to end the construction quickly.[191] Dozens of buildings which belonged to different ministries would be built in New Erzincan therefore coordination between these ministries had to be very high because due to the legal necessities the funding of each building had to be sent from the related ministry.[192] This included the funding sent from the earthquake commission. The amount of money which would be used for each building was determined by each ministry. It was illegal to use the funding of

[190] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 54.
[191] Ibid., 44.
[192] Ibid.

a less important building which belongs to a specific ministry in order to construct a vital building which belongs to another ministry.[193] So fundings had to be sent from all ministries at the same time to finish the construction quickly.

This constant derive to speed was not caused only by the limited yearly construction period but also by the citizens themselves. If the construction would take long time it would be much harder to make the citizens who were living in the temporary city, settle in New Erzincan.[194] Naturally the ones who were relatively well-off would demand to build their own houses in the temporary city. In order to avoid such a tendency, constructing a house for permanent use in the temporary city was forbidden by the local administration led by Tükel. Supposedly this would make them wait and buy their new houses from the newly constructed neighborhoods in New Erzincan.

Knowing that they would not get a title deed if they attempt to build a new house in the temporary city, citizens who had money to build a new house had no choice but to continue to live in huts in bad conditions. If the construction would take longer than expected these people would not wait to buy their new houses from New Erzincan but would increasingly impose pressure on the local administration to allow them to build their new houses on their own in the temporary city. If Tükel were to have yielded to this pressure more and more people would have settled in the temporary city and new Erzincan would turn into a bureaucratic settlement comprised of only state buildings.

[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid., 56.

Furthermore, in these conditions it would be almost impossible to ensure that ordinary citizens would build safe houses by themselves based on the designs produced by Asım Kömürcüoğlu for the New Erzincan project because these designs required import of high quality construction materials out of the province. Considering the transportation costs and high wartime inflation rate which proved to be very severe in the prices of construction materials construction expenditures would rise to tremendous levels for citizens. For example between 1938 and 1943 prices of brick increased by 300%, timber %400, lime 1040%, tile 1400%, cement 150% and iron 900%.[195] In order to avoid these expenses, citizens would have no choice but to build their houses based on simple designs most probably by using adobe which in turn would render the houses extremely fragile against a potential earthquake.

Tükel came to Ankara at the end of April 1941 in order to present the New Erzincan Project to prime minister.[196] Tükel explained the project by demonstrating an album in which Kömürcüoğlu's city plan alongside with water electricity and sewage projects were compiled. At the end of the meeting Refik Saydam approved the project and ordered the head of earthquake commission Demirel to make the necessary preparations for legislation of a law on allocation of a loan worth two million lira to the municipality of Erzincan for the project of New Erzincan.[197] Adjusting to the inflation rate this sum equals to approximately 27,1 million dollars now.[198] On June 23, 1941 the related law was legislated. Two million liras would be given to the municipality of Erzincan and this interest-free loan would be paid back starting

[195] M. Selçuk Özkan and Abidin Temizer, "İkinci Dünya Savaşı'nda Türkiye'de Karaborsacılık," *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* 9, no. 2 (2009): 321.
[196] Ibid., 30.
[197] Ibid., 31.
[198] USD/Lira parity on the first trading day of 1941 was 1,3447 lira therefore this sum amounted to 1,487,320 USD in 1941, adjusting to the inflation rate it equals to 27,106,565 USD now.

from 1944 in twenty years. Municipality would have the right to give loan from this sum to the cooperative which would undertake the construction of houses.[199]

Boosted by the atmosphere of optimism that emerged as a result of the support of prime minister construction efforts commenced by the end of spring. Groundbreaking ceremonies of the prison, elementary school, municipality building, gashouse and Kızılay hospital were made.[200] It is worth to note that construction of all these buildings had been decided before the emergence of New Erzincan project and their budget had already been sent by the related ministries.[201] Out of these buildings Kızılay hospital was given the utmost priority due to the poor state of the temporary hospital which was comprised of tents that were making life utterly miserable for the patients during the summer and winter.[202] This hospital was constructed rapidly by using Kızılay funds alongside eight houses which were built for civil servants.[203] Hospital started to operate with one hundred bed capacity by the end of summer.[204] In addition to this construction of twenty shops was completed by using the fund allocated from the municipality.[205] These shops were built of stone and brick and were constructed by strictly adhering to the earthquake regulation.[206] As can be seen from these developments, in an atmosphere of optimism fostered by the political support coming from the government construction of New Erzincan has already started before the transfer of the two million lira worth loan to the municipality.

[199] T.C. Resmi Gazete, 22.06.1941, no:4848
[200] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 44.
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid., 45.
[203] Ibid.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Ibid.

President İsmet İnönü's visit to Erzincan on October 13, 1941 further contributed to the air of optimism regarding New Erzincan project. He initially inspected the Kızılay neighborhood and recently constructed Kızılay hospital then Tükel explicated the details of the New Erzincan project by using a copy of the album which he had given to the prime minister after their last meeting.[207] This copy was recorded in the inventory list and carefully kept in a locked chest in the municipality by Tükel in order to ensure that a clear foundation in other words a guideline would be present for the continuation of the project even if he leaves his post for some reason in the future.[208] İnönü asked further questions about the infrastructure projects of New Erzincan and Tükel responded by saying that electricity, water and sewage systems were meticulously planned and they would be financed from the two million lira budget. He assured that construction of them would be one of the initial objectives of the project which envisioned "a quick and total construction."[209]

Tükel states in his memoir that four-star general Kazım Orbay was also present at the meeting and at the end of it, in line with the optimism of İnönü he said with enthusiasm that "when we return back to Erzincan after two years we will walk in this new city which promises beauty."[210] These supportive words which came from a high ranking general who would later be the chief of general staff in 1944 are very telling, considering the fact that army was in favor of increasing the share of military expenditures in the national budget due to the imminent threat of war. In the aftermath of this meeting İnönü gave a directive to the ministry of internal affairs to immediately send the loan to the municipality and provide utmost help to the governor.[211]

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[207] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 47.
[208] Ibid., 31.
[209] Ibid., 49. *"Kül halinde, bir an evvel meydana getirilmesine çalışılan şehirde…"*
[210] Ibid. *"Efendim, iki sene sonra tekrar Erzincan'a geldiğimizde bu güzellik vadeden şehri dolaşmak nasip olacak."*
[211] Ibid., 51.

Inönü's directive to the ministry of internal affairs did not prevent the emergence of a serious delay in the delivery of the loan. On November 11, 1941 ministry of internal affairs informed the municipality that the loan would be sent in three separate fractions, in 1941 500,000 lira, in 1942 790,000 lira and rest of it would be sent in 1943.[212] Despite this declaration of the ministry of internal affairs, ministry of finance did not send the first portion of the loan in 1941 on the grounds that "this money could not be spent in the same year."[213] Tükel formally objected to this decision of the ministry by underling the fact that:

> "Ministry of finance was not giving an additional funding for the construction of a specific building to a ministry or an office which had to strictly abide by the budget regulations. It was going to give an aid fund which had been allocated from the state budget within the framework of a special law in order to construct the new city without any delay."[214]

Objections of Tükel which emphasized the urgency of the project and the extraordinary character of the funding fell short of changing the decision of the ministry. First portion of the budget was transferred as late as May 1942. Apart from its belated transfer, only a fraction of it worth 303,300 lira was sent instead of 500,000 lira as had been previously promised by the ministry of internal affairs.[215] These were huge blows for the project. Necessary construction materials could not be bought and stored in the winter. Tükel was aware of the fact that a potential delay in the construction would add a tremendous stress on the uneasy relationship between himself and the citizens. As described by Akpınar in the first report that he has written after the earthquake on July 21, 1941 citizens "were living in a makeshift fashion because they

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[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid., 54. *"Senesi içinde sarfedilemeyeceğinden dolayı…"*
[214] Ibid., 55. *"Maliye Vekaleti umumi bütçe kaidelerine uymak macburiyetinde bulunan bir vekalete yahut bit daireye muayyen bir inşaat karşılığı olarak tahsisat ilavesi verecek değildi. Hususi kanuna tevfikan Erzincan şehrinin biran evvel vücuda getirilmesi için devlet bütçesinden yapılan bir yardım parasını ödeyecekti."*
[215] Ibid., 59.

were not helped by providing places to build their own houses".[216] A potential poor record of progress during the limited construction period in the summer would certainly lead these citizens to demand from Tükel more vigorously than ever to allow them to construct their own houses in the temporary city.

Therefore, despite the delay in the transfer of the loan, Tükel followed the initial plan and took tangible steps to avoid doubts about the project. In March 1942 New Erzincan Founding Houses Cooperative Company (Yeni Erzincan Şehri Kuruluş Evleri Kooperatif Şirketi) was founded. In short time thirty citizens joined the cooperative. According to the cooperative regulation (nizamname) each new member had to buy sixty shares by paying 300 lira. By the beginning of the construction each member had to pay in advance ten percent of the type of house they wanted to have. After the end of the construction, houses would be given to the members by a lot. Rest of the price would be paid in installments for twenty years. Cooperative's objective was constructing three hundred houses, another three hundred of them would be constructed based on the demand.[217]

Based on the "total construction and total contracting out" (toplu inşaat toplu ihale) system adopted by the ministry of public works to ensure the construction of New Erzincan as soon as possible, cooperative's initial objective was contracting out the construction of the initial three hundred houses by open bidding.[218] However, delay in the transfer of the initial portion of the loan disrupted this strategy. This sum was the foundation of the open bidding

[216] BCA.490.01.646.145.1.77. *"…ev ve baraka yaptırarak barınacak yer tedariki hususunda himaye ve kolaylık görmedikleri için eğreti vaziyette oturmaktadırlar"*
[217] *Yeni Erzincan*, May 28, 1942.
[218] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 55.

process but in the absence of it, it was almost impossible to find a contractor who could possibly undertake such an enormous task which required a large amount of capital.

Instead of delaying the open bidding until the transfer of the first portion of the loan, it was carried out albeit only construction of 60 houses were contracted out.[219] However, it was obvious that without the transfer of the first portion of the loan, neither the small budget raised in the cooperative nor the limited budget of the municipality which was amounted to only 70,000 lira could suffice to buy even the construction materials for these 60 houses let alone carrying out the actual construction.[220] By the end of spring Tükel was looking forward to the transfer of the first portion of the loan, if "it would be sent then there would not be any obstacles to fulfill the desires of the nation and realize the objective of government on time."[221] On May 1942 only a fraction of the promised first portion of the loan came nevertheless the import of the necessary construction materials for the project was immediately contracted out. However, this simple operation marked the beginning of the clash between Tükel and the Altınok family-Akpınar alliance which eventually developed into an all-out fight that negatively affected the course of development of the New Erzincan project.

[219] Ibid., 56.
[220] Ibid., 19.
[221] Ibid., 56. *"Bütün milletin hatta insanlığın mukaddes arzuları yerine getirilecek, hükumetin emeli vaktinde tahakkuk ettirilecekti."*

5. Causes of the Clash Between Altınok- Akpınar Alliance and Tükel: Construction Material Contract and Personal Issues

Even though it was less than the amount that had been promised before, the transfer of 303,300 lira in May 1942 still made the municipality capable of proceeding the construction of the New Erzincan. Head of the local party organization Rıza Altınok managed to get the contract of the provision of construction materials such as plaster, bricks and tiles for the New Erzincan project. However, the materials that have been brought were rejected by the commission formed by the provincial civil works department (fen işleri müdürlüğü) based on the result of the tests made on them. Commission decided that they were not meeting with the expected quality standards have been declared in the contract. Apparently, the plaster brought by Altınok was nothing more than piles of useless powder and bricks were of poor quality as well, they were turning into mud in short time when they were immersed in water.[222]

In the face of these developments, as a powerful local elite Rıza Altınok resorted to using his influence to change the decision of the commission. Initially he tried to impose pressure on the members of the commission. Not succeeding in getting the decision reversed Altınok applied to the governorate but it rejected to take part in acquisition of materials that did not comply with the "standards imposed by the contract and science".[223] Unable to change the result, Altınok tried to use the power that he derived from the party.

Planning to use the power of party over the bureaucracy he sought help from his reliable ally: party inspector Akpınar. Party inspector made an official complaint to the governorate and

[222] Ibid., 65-66.
[223] Ibid.65. *"…fenne ve şartnameye uygun olmayan malzemenin…"*

demanded the acceptance of the construction materials.[224] Governorate answered to this clear interference of the party in the internal affairs of bureaucracy by reminding to the party inspector the limits of its own authority:

> "Acceptance of the proposed construction materials only concerns the civil servants in the department of civil works, making them accept the things rejected by them is not right and do not match with the principles of our party."[225]

The uncompromising stance taken by the governorate led by Tükel against the combined pressure of Altınok and Akpınar was not just based on a stubborn adherence to the intrabureaucratic autonomy or the principle of separateness of bureaucracy and party. The lived experience of the second earthquake that had happened on November 12, 1941 has played a key role as well in Tükel's decision to not help Akpınar in making his construction materials accepted. This earthquake which's magnitude was 5,9 did not inflict huge damage because there were only newly constructed pavyons and huts made out of light material in the temporary city.[226] However, the Public House building which was one of the few buildings that had survived the earthquake of 1939 had been severely weakened by it so as a result of the second earthquake it became totally destroyed.[227]

As a result of the investigation conducted in the aftermath of the earthquake which was attended by Tükel as well, the use of low quality plaster was found as the primary reason behind the collapse of the Public House building.[228] Later, the minister of public works Ali Fuat Cebesoy was shown the ruins of the building and he personally observed the low quality of the

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[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid. *"... teklif edilen malzemenin kabülü fen memurlarını alakadar eder, onlar tarafından redde uğrayan şeyleri onlara kabul ettirmek doğru bir hareket olamaz ve partimizin umdelerine uymaz."*
[226] BCA.490.01.646.145.1.2.
[227] Ibid.
[228] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 66.

plaster used in the building "which could be reduced to powder between one's fingers".[229] Moreover according to Tükel the materials brought by Rıza Altınok was actually owned by someone else.[230] Altınok's only function was acquiring the contract by using the influence he derived from being the head of local party organization.[231] The absence of the actual provider of the construction materials which could be held accountable apparently added a further layer to Tükel's distrust of Altınok. Apparently the actual provider of the construction materials had planned to get the contract by using Altınok as an intermediary and tried to make them accepted by using Altınok's influence.

At the end, Tükel did not yield to the pressure of Altınok backed by Akpınar and caused him to lose the contract by not interfering in the decision mechanism of the commission. This incident was not just an important economic loss for Altınok but a clear demonstration of the fact that at the local politics Tükel would be an obstacle to him in imposing his will on various bureaucratic institutions by using the power he derived from the party. Euphemistically Tükel stated in his memoir that "this rejection constituted the essence of the umbrage".[232]

However, before explaining the incremental growth of the tension between both parties it is important to note that Akpınar's motive in joining Altınok's struggle against Tükel was not solely based on his close alliance with him. Long before the interests of Altınok were tangibly harmed by Tükel within the framework of construction material contract, Akpınar had disliked Tükel. His antipathy towards him can be inferred from the report he wrote on July 21, 1941. In this report Akpınar was declaring his reservations about Tükel in a highly exaggerated fashion

[229] Ibid. *"...parmaklar arasında bayağı toz haline geldiği..."*
[230] Ibid., 65.
[231] Ibid.
[232] Ibid., 66. *"Bu ilk red cevabı iğbirarın növesini teşkil etti."*

and making serious allegations regarding his administration of the governorate and the municipality:

> Governorate and municipality of Erzincan are being administered by incompetent men in lawlessness without relying on any form of a regulation. Large sums of money are being wasted on the grounds that the city would be reconstructed. Money is spent without keeping any records. Municipality is filled with thieves. They get protected when complaints are directed against them. Neither directors of departments nor civil servants, citizens or business owners, not a single person is happy with the governorate and the municipality. Governor is an amateur for this task and he is ignorant. He is vindictive and vengeful. The province cannot tolerate any more pain. There is no room for insistence and stubbornness. His correction is needed for the benefit of the country. Current status quo in which the mayorship is held by the governor, works as an additional weapon in the hands of them.[233]

More than being a simple critique, his words were closer to a denigration of Tükel. The exaggerated and highly subjective tone of the text shows his antipathy towards him. Bringing a statesman's competence under question by describing him as "amateur and ignorant" despite being aware of his six-year service as a mayor and using provocative words such as "vindictive and vengeful" to describe his personality indicates there might have been a subtle personal dimension to his conflict with Tükel. Apart from its more visible façade in relation to the subsequent damages inflicted by Tükel on the interests of his close ally Rıza Altınok.

Moreover, besides explicitly declaring his dislike of Tükel, Akpınar made serious accusations against him without bringing any proof. Particularly In the last sentence, by using the plural suffix he implies that there might be a criminal network in the governorate and the

[233] BCA.490.01.646.145.1.120. *"Erzincan vilayet ve belediye umuru, iş bilmez adamların elinde oyuncak olmuştur. Her şey, usulsüz, kanunsuz, indi ve hodbindir. Memleket imar edilecek diye, bir çok paralar israf edilmektedir. Paralar hesapsız savruluyor. Belediye hırsızlarla dolu. Şikayet edildikçe himaye edilmektedirler. Ne şube müdürleri, ne memurlar, ne halk ve ne de iş sahiplerinden bir tek kişi vilayetten ve belediyeden memnun ve hoşnut değildir. Vali bu işin çok acemisi ve cahildir. Kindardır, garazkardır. Memleketin ıztıraba tahammülü yoktur. Israr ve inat yersizdir. Islahı memleketin yüksek menfaatı namına lazımdır. Belediye reisliğinin Vali uhdesinde bulunuşu ellerinde ayrıca silah oluyor."*

municipality that steals the available fiscal resources, to which Tükel helps by circumventing the regulations and ignoring the complaints directed against this network's members. Apparently, his ill-founded accusations were not taken seriously in the upper echelons of the bureaucracy and no official investigation was conducted against Tükel based on this report. Not a surprising development considering the fact that as an administrator to whom the New Erzincan project had been entrusted, he was being closely supported by the Saydam government.

If we look at on the other side of the coin, Akpınar's personal antipathy was not directly reciprocated by Tükel. He states in his memoir that he approached Akpınar always with respect and friendship.[234] His antipathy was mainly directed against Altınok. He draws a picture of a corrupt and incompetent local power holder when he describes him in in his memoir:

> "Leader of the provincial party organization (vilayet parti reisi) was the most prominent figure in Erzincan. Supposedly he was elected to this post but it was rumored among public that party inspector's patronage helped him a lot to get this post. This man was not only uncultured but also not fully literate. He was not loved in the district due to various reasons one among them was his conviction in the past… Even though he did not have a capital he was keen to get contracts by using the prestige of his post."[235]

Clearly Tükel was not very fond of Altınok who represented a type of a local elite that he was very familiar with based on his experiences in Maraş. Being a member of a local powerful family, Altınok used his influence to form an alliance with the newly appointed party inspector which enabled him to acquire a post for which he did not have the necessary intellectual competence in the first place. After securing his position he attempted to gain

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[234] Ibid., 68.

[235] Ibid., 65. *"Erzincan'da ilk nazara çarpan vilayet parti reisi idi. Bu zat o mevkiye intihapla gelmiş olacak. Fakat halk dilinde parti müfettişinin hamiliğinin büyük yardımı olduğu çalkalanmakta idi. Bu zatın kültürsüz olmasından başka okuması ve yazısı da noksandı. Muhitte katiyen sevilmemişti. Bunun sebeplerinden biri de mazideki mahkumiyeti idi… Sermayesi olmamakla beraber taahhüt işlerine girmekte büyük bir gayret gösteriridi."*

various forms of advantages through using the power that he derived from this post. Tükel wrote in his first memoir that "the hostile and destructive actions carried out by Akpınar against him was mainly caused by the legal and logical decisions taken in relation to the head of local party organization" alluding to Altınok's loss of the construction material contract.[236] When he was writing these words Tükel either underestimated or could not see the personal dimension of Akpınar's antipathy towards him. Much to his surprise "the hostile and destructive actions" of Akpınar against him continued six years after he was deposed from his posts in Erzincan when the contract dispute was supposed to fade away like a distant memory.

As a reflection of the staggering endurance of his deep-seated resentment against Tükel, Akpınar played a key role in the expulsion of Tükel from the Republican People's Party in 1949. According to the official decree Tükel was expelled due to his participation in a by election in Erzincan which took place on October 17, 1948 as an independent candidate and his publication of a brochure for his campaign.[237] However, after he was expelled his close friend deputy Hilmi Uran told him that his expulsion was not related with his candidacy or the brochure. Muzaffer Akpınar saw Tükel in the congress of Democrat Party. Apparently Tükel was enthusiastically clapping the speeches and Akpınar reported his attendance and this petty detail to the general secretariat and this caused his expulsion from the party.[238]

In short words, it is highly probable that his strong antipathy towards Tükel might have worked as an additional motive for Akpınar to join the campaign against Tükel. Following the damage inflicted on their interests within the context of the construction material contract

[236] Ibid., 68. *"... hakkımda gösterdiği haşin ve yıkıcı hareketlerin saikini parti reisine yapılan bu gibi kanuni ve mantıki kararlarda aramak lazım geliyordu."*
[237] BCA.490.01.9.47.8.1.
[238] Sükuti Tükel, Tatlı ve Acı Hatıralar, 181-182.

Altınok-Akpınar alliance sought to trigger an official investigation against Tükel which would hopefully end up with his deposition. The yearly inspection report of Akpınar was used as a platform to launch their accusations against Tükel on the issue which was most likely to catch the attention of the government within the troublesome context of 1942: the provision of cereals.

The expected hardships in the provision of cereals due to the Second World War began to emerge after 1940. In 1941 cereal production dropped approximately by 15 percent below their 1937-39 levels as a result of the shortage of labor in rural areas, decline in the availability of draught animals and government's forced purchases below the market prices.[239] "In February 1941 government required all producers to sell their entire cereal crop to the Turkish Grain Board at predetermined below market prices after allowances made for household subsistence seed and animal feed."[240] This policy backfired, cereal harvest of 1942 was approximately 15-20 percent below the 1941 levels.[241] The discontent of peasants regarding this policy was extremely high and they passively resisted to it by resorting to different methods such as hiding the harvest, bribing the officials, delivering grains of low quality etc.[242] Being aware of the fact that "outbreaks of famines are not necessarily related to the decrease in the overall availability of food but uneven distribution of the available food", state was extremely sensitive about the efficient utilization of the collected cereals by ensuring their distribution to the urban centers and regions which were not self-sufficient.[243]

[239] Şevket Pamuk, "War, State Economic Policies and Resistance by Agricultural Producers in Turkey 1939-1945," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 2, (2015): 22-24
[240] Ibid., 27.
[241] Ibid., 23.
[242] Ibid., 28.
[243] Ibid., 24.

In his report written on July 14, 1942 Akpınar claimed that both rural and urban citizens in the province of Erzincan were fed up not only with the aforementioned policy of the state but also the measures taken by the local administration. Akpınar reported that the governorate has not been allowing the transportation of cereals within the province which has caused one district to live in abundance and another to suffer from scarcity. As a result of this prohibition the price of cereals has risen by fifteen times in the black-market. The price of wheat became 25 lira per kilogram. In addition to these he claimed that 50 tons of wheat and 80 tons of beans have been stored pointlessly in the warehouses of Erzincan for several months and they have become rotten. He continued by claiming that all of the wheat produced in Refahiye was brought to the central district by the Agriculture Bank but Cengerli village has been eating grass (otlamak) for two months. Akpınar's allegations reached to their climax when he denounced Tükel's policies as a breach of the principle of populism by stating that:

> Not sending food items to a certain part of the motherland as if it is racially and nationally separate from another part of it … not permitting the transfer of food items even within the province is inexplicable.[244]

Akpınar put the "despotic mentality" of the governor "which led him to exercise the authority given from the center in extremely harsh fashion" as the primary reason behind the chaotic atmosphere in the province.[245] He claimed that this despotic mentality was harming the efficient functioning of the demand system which underlay the cooperation between the local bureaucracy and the local party organization:

> "There is no cooperation between the officials-civil servants of the local administration and the party. Governor is not paying attention to anybody except his close circle as if he administers a kingdom and he does not fulfill the desires of the

[244] BCA.490.01.646.145.1.22. *"Bir vatan parçasını diğer bir cüz ile arada ırk ve milliyet farkı varmış gibi ayrı ayrı tutarak gıda maddesi göndermemek … hatta vilayet dahilinde olsun bir yerden bir yere müsaade edilmemesinin sırrı izah edilemez"*
[245] Ibid., 28. *"Merkezden verlien ufak selahiyetleri müstebit zihniyetle en şiddetli şekilde tatbik etmek yüzünden…"*

> public transmitted through the justified contacts and appeals of the party's board of administration which in turn belittle the significance of party in the eyes of them."[246]

He reported that complaints regarding the provision of cereals were raining down on him every single day during his stay in the central district.[247] However, he chose not to extend his yearly investigation to the villages like he had done last year in order to avoid hearing the similar complaints there as well.[248] He justified this course of action by claiming that visiting the villagers and listening their complaints would have created the impression that the party was not capable of solving their complaints.[249] He was sure that even if he had transmitted them to the governorate they would have certainly been ignored. Seeing their complaints-demands' failure to produce a tangible result in return would have further damaged the prestige of the party in the eye of the public.

Contrary to the expectations of the Akpınar-Altınok alliance the inspection report in which severe allegations were directed against Tükel regarding the provision of cereals, was not followed with an investigation on the part of the government. Only after two months, on October 17, 1942 minister of commerce Behçet Uz wrote a letter to Tükel and demanded an explanation regarding the allegations of Akpınar. Tükel rejected all accusations and answered them one by one in detailed way. He declared that transportation of cereals was totally permitted within the province and there was not even a single case of scarcity.[250] Furthermore he stated that the demands of citizens regarding the provision of cereals were taken seriously and

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[246] Ibid. *"Mahalli hükumet amir ve memurları ile Parti arasında iş ve fikir beraberliği yoktur. Asıl iş valinin bir krallık idare eder gibi kendi çevresinden haricine kıymet vermemesi ve Parti, idare heyetinin haklı temas ve müracaatlarında arzularını is'af etmediği için Parti'yi halk nazarında daima küçültmüş olmasındandır."*
[247] Ibid., 22.
[248] Ibid.
[249] Ibid.
[250] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 69.

necessary deployments of additional cereals were organized based on the needs of each district.[251] Underlining that not a single grain or bean got rotten in warehouses of the governorate he called these claims "fabrications of a couple of depraved men who could not obtain profit in the face of honest and farsighted attitude of the governorate."[252]

Tükel narrated the backstory of these slanders directed against him. 80 tons of beans were purchased from the merchants based on the need of the army.[253] These merchants demanded 45-50 kuruş to be paid per kilo but the governorate rejected this since the price determined by the state was 23 kuruş.[254] Tükel claimed that some merchants even came to his office and tried to bribe him by asking him to buy the beans based on the price that they have demanded in exchange of making a large donation worth ten percent of the total sale to a charity organization.[255] He rejected this offer and governorate bought the beans based on the official price and as a retaliation a story was invented "by the hoarders on the issue which state was most sensitive about."[256] They started to spread the word that beans were getting rotten in the warehouses of the governorate. By narrating the chain of events in this fashion Tükel implied that Akpınar was in effect backing the interests of hoarders by putting their slanders without reservation in his report despite having a chance to check on the ground whether they were true or not.[257]

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[251] Ibid., 71.
[252] Ibid. *"Memlekette vilayetin dürüst hareketi ve basireti karşısında menfaat temin edemeyen süfli ruhlu birkaç adamın uydurmasıdır."*
[253] Ibid., 70.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Ibid.
[256] Ibid. 71. "*Stokçular devletin en hassas noktasını ele alarak fasulyelerin koktuğunu ileri sürdüler."*
[257] Ibid., 72.

Apparently Tükel's explanations were found persuasive by the ministry and no investigation has been initiated. However, an important event happened during the summer of 1942 which had a much greater potential to threaten the longevity of Tükel's term in Erzincan than Akpınar's yearly report. This was the unexpected death of Refik Saydam on July 8, 1942. Saydam had been giving the necessary political support for the birth of the new Erzincan Project and he had personally appointed Tükel as the mayor-governor to lead it, assuring him that he would keep him in Erzincan until the end of the project. Being a protégé of the prime minister, Tükel had been secured from the pressure of citizens who were demanding from him to lift the ban on construction in the temporary city.

Yet while he was enjoying Saydam's backing Tükel experienced that even a prime minister's support had its limits. Only a fraction of the first portion of the funding was transferred to the municipality and it was sent belatedly. Construction materials could not be stored in the winter and combined with the difficulties that emerged in the construction material contract New Erzincan Project lagged behind the schedule. In addition to these problems the dissolution of Saydam cabinet put both the project and the seat of Tükel in a precarious position. In such an ambiguous atmosphere Saraçoğlu made an important visit to Erzincan on August 30, 1942 which would show whether he would choose to uphold the project as enthusiastically as his predecessor had done or simply disinherit it.[258]

By the time Saraçoğlu arrived in Erzincan, the optimism about the project which had been dominant in the city last year has already left its place to doubts about it. A report written by Erzincan deputy Salih Başotaç on August 29,1942 demonstrates the slowness of the progress

[258] Erdem Yavuz, *Türk Siyasi Tarihinde Erzincan (1923-1960)* (Istanbul: Arı Sanat Yayınevi, 2018), 235.

made in the construction of New Erzincan during the summer of 1942. Başotaç stated that there were only a small number of construction activities going on in the city and due to the lack of cement provision the construction of buildings such as prison, school and steam house has stopped. He warned that if the necessary amount of cement would not be sent before the winter the expenses which had been made on them would be nullified by next year.[259]

Başotaç's report demonstrates that Tükel's fears came true. The belated transfer of the first portion of the budget disabled municipality to store construction materials in the winter and problems experienced in contracting out their delivery further delayed the purchase of construction materials. This delay was particularly damaging in the acquisition of cement whose low amount of production was already generating a scarcity in the country. There were only five cement factories in the country by 1942 and they could not keep up with the demand.[260] This made early ordering vital because it was common not to be able to find a single sack of cement despite having the money to purchase it. For example in the same report Başotaç states that Kemah district had the necessary budget to buy two hundred sacks of cement for the construction of a drinking water installation but they could not find any.[261]

Not seeing any tangible improvement in the construction site citizens' discontent was increasing. As reported by Başotaç, citizens were constantly "complaining about the neglect of construction."[262] In this environment Saraçoğlu visited the city on August 30, 1942 and held a meeting with Tükel in his office. Erzincan deputies have attended to this meeting as well. Like he had done during his meeting with İnönü last year Tükel started to make a presentation on

[259] BCA.490.01.646.145.1.48.
[260] İlke Tekin, "Türkiye'de İkinci Dünya Savaşı Sonrası Betonarmenin İnşası" (PhD diss., İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü, 2013), 92.
[261] BCA.490.01.646.145.1.48. *"Halk imar ciheti ihmal edildiğinden dolayı mızlanmaktadır."*
[262] Ibid.

the New Erzincan Project by using the album which he has been carefully preserving in a locked chase in the governorate. However, in contrast to İnönü's enthusiasm, Saraçoğlu appeared to be disinterested. As vividly described by Tükel in his memoir, in the middle of the presentation Saraçoğlu left the table and moved towards the armchair which was situated on the opposite corner of the room to have a rest. Despite this ominous gesture Tükel continued and brought up issues such as the shortage of funding for the construction of the government building and lack of materials necessary for the construction of sewage-water and electricity systems of New Erzincan. Their open bidding contracts were being prepared and they were planned to be constructed in the next year by using the second portion of the loan which had promised to be transferred to the municipality in 1943.[263]

Saraçoğlu promised to allocate the necessary funding for the construction of the government building. He also approved the plan to import the necessary materials for the construction of electricity and water systems of New Erzincan from Germany in exchange of exportation of certain goods. Turkish ambassador in Berlin Saffet Arıkan who had served to Erzincan as a deputy in the Grand National Assembly for five terms personally negotiated with the German government for the realization of this barter. Also Erzincan deputy Abdülhak Fırat held talks with the German ambassador in Ankara Franz von Papen who later communicated with the German government and managed to get the approval for the deal. German government ordered A.S.G company to carry out this operation. However, this operation could not be realized due to the "indifference" (kayıtsızlık alakasızlık) shown in later stages as told by Tükel. However, the second portion of the loan which had been promised to be sent in 1943 by the previous cabinet, was never sent to the municipality of Erzincan under Saraçoğlu cabinet.[264]

[263] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 61.
[264] Ibid., 61-62.

Saraçoğlu left Erzincan the same day. The meeting did not appear to be a defeat for the New Erzincan at first sight. Ostensibly political support for the project was persisting considering the promises made by Saraçoğlu. However, his experiences with İnönü and Saydam had shown Tükel that promises made by politicians were not necessarily followed rapidly with tangible actions. As the primary promoter of the new Erzincan Project in the city, the pressure on him was mounting day by day as citizens were increasingly becoming disillusioned with the project due to its slow progress. Akpınar-Altınok alliance was also playing an active role in exacerbating public distrust to the project. As the yearly construction period reached to its end, seeing that the allegations regarding the provision of cereals fell short of bringing the desired outcome, they changed their strategy from directing ill-founded allegations against Tükel to building up pressure on him by capitalizing on the growing discontent regarding the New Erzincan Project.

Up to this point Tükel has already invested large political capital on the project to the extent that New Erzincan transformed virtually into his raison d'etre in Erzincan. Since its first issue he used weekly newspaper "Yeni Erzincan" to inform the citizens about the project and in doing so he did not refrain from making assurances that the project would succeed and New Erzincan "would rise as a developed city of the East."[265] As a result of such promises which were repeatedly made by Tükel, the future of the project and long-term trajectory of his political career in Erzincan became inseparably tied to one another. Recognizing this fact, Akpınar-Altınok alliance sought to provoke doubts and foster skepticism among the citizens and local political elites about the project. Decrease in the local support for New Erzincan would supposedly work as an additional factor that would lead the project to its overall cancellation

[265] *Yeni Erzincan*, March 26, 1942. *"...şarkın bir mamuresi olarak yükselecek."*

which was more likely than ever considering the precarious state it was in due to the poor progress recorded in the last yearly construction period. If New Erzincan project got cancelled, it would have been almost impossible for Tükel to keep his posts since he was appointed to Erzincan to lead its realization in the first place.

Tükel personally witnessed a talk given by Akpınar in which he publicly campaigned against the project. Bypassing the general secretariat to which Akpınar was accountable as a party inspector, Tükel immediately reported this incident to the president İsmet İnönü by sending a coded letter on September 15, 1942.[266] Tükel's direct appeal to İnönü is a striking event that demonstrates the scale of ambiguity in the nature of party-state relations of the era and incapability of intermediary institutions to solve the conflicts which kept emerging due to this persisting ambiguity. Certainly, party was no longer subservient to the state at this point like it had been during the times of party-state unification but the extent of party's newly gained autonomy vis-a-vis the state still remained to be clarified. Since İnönü was on top of both chain of commands as the leader of the party and head of the executive branch, Tükel found no option but to ask from him to produce a binding decision which would put an end to the unruly behaviors of the party inspector who dared to campaign against a project which was backed by the executive instead of cooperating in harmony with the local administration for its realization.

In his telegram Tükel quoted verbatim the words uttered by Akpınar during the talk given by him at the hotel of temporary city in the presence of several citizens and deputies Abdühak Fırat and Aziz Sami İlter. According to Tükel's claim, Akpınar said that:

[266] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 72.

> "This city cannot be constructed with the embellished album of Kömürcüoğlu Asım and colored pictures in it. Whether the prime ministership or the ministry of public works whomever will take care of it, this affair has to be restarted from scratch."[267]

After underlining the fact that this was the same album examined and approved by İnönü during his last visit to Erzincan, Tükel condemned the words of Akpınar as an attempt "to put him in trouble and provide the necessary ground for annihilation of the official undertakings that had been conducted by him."[268] He further added that:

> "If these words are not the complaints of few number of people whose interest were harmed and if the opinions of party inspector are representing the truth than I have committed the crime of misleading our leader. Spread of these words especially among the public may harm the administrative authority of the governorate. Witnessing this behavior of the party inspector while I was expecting his support and collaboration hurt me."[269]

Bringing the dramatic tone of the text to its climax, he concluded his letter by demanding to be given the most severe punishment if he had committed the crime of misleading the leader.[270] It is important to note that Tükel accused Akpınar of being the spokesman for the damaged interests of a small circle. By doing so, he drew a dichotomy between his administration that promoted a project which would benefit the majority of the citizens and Akpınar who was backing interests of a few people who were in conflict with those of the majority. Tükel once again responded by using his typical line of argumentation in a letter to the ministry of

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[267] Ibid. *"Kömürcüoğlu Asım'ın yaptığı süslü albüm ve içindeki boyalı resimlerlebu şehir yapılamaz. Bu işe Başvekalet mi yoksa Nafia mı kim bakacaksa yeniden başlamak lazımdır."*
[268] Ibid., 73. *"...resmi teşebbüsleirmizi hiçe indirmek ve nevüma bizi müşküllere düşürmek yolunu hazırlamak istemiştir."*
[269] Ibid. "*Bu sözler menfaatleri rencide olan birkaç şikayetçinin tercümanı olmuyorsa ve müfettişin kanaatleri gibi müsbet ise Liderimizi iğfal suçunu işlemiş bir durumda bulunmaktayım. Hususiyle halk arasında yayılan bu gibi sözler vilayetin idari ve imari otoritesini haleldar edebilecektir. Parti müfettişinden kuvvet ve müzaharet beklerken bu makus hareketi görmek bendenize çok acı gelmiştir."*
[270] Ibid. *"...iğfal gibi bugünkü ahlak mefhumuna asla uymayan tarzda işlenmiş suçum vakiyse memleketin ve milletin mümtaz gayesine erişmesi şerefine en ağır cezaları görmekliğime iradelerinizi saygılarımla araz eylerim."*

commerce written on October 17, 1942, implying that Akpınar was in effect being spokesman for a few hoarders' interests by reporting their slanders as the truth.[271]

In the face of the rising doubts about the project that were further fostered by the efforts of Altınok-Akpınar alliance, Tükel tried to regain back the trust of ordinary citizens and local political elites. The upcoming opening ceremony of the newly constructed modern cemetery and martyrs' monument which had been planned to take place on October 12, 1942 was modified to serve this purpose. October 12, 1942 was named as the Founding Day of New Erzincan (Yeni Erzincan'ın kuruluş bayramı). By this measure not just the lost lives would be commemorated during the opening ceremony of the cemetery and the monument but the founding of the new city would be celebrated as well. At first sight this maneuver may seem absurd since new Erzincan was far from being materialized. However, simultaneously commemorating the losses and celebrating New Erzincan which government came up with in order to avoid such devastating losses in the future, was thought to be effective in boosting people's willingness to support the project. In the speeches given during the ceremony, this point was underlined and a direct connection was drawn between the catastrophe of 1939 and the New Erzincan project which was posited as the rational response of state and nation to it.

In the opening of the speech which he gave on behalf of the committee that organized the celebration, the cashier of local Agriculture Bank Enver Gökçe firmly established the link between the earthquake and the project by putting them as two sides of the same coin:

> "I commemorate with deep respect the martyrs whom the force of Nature (capitalized in the original) caught in their warm beds and sweet dreams. The sacred souls which fell victim to that catastrophe are situated over the city that we are founding

[271] Ibid., 69.

> here. The brand new indestructible city which their children, their siblings, their grandchildren will construct, will be born out of the aids of the Nation and the State"[272]

Rather than making dry promises on behalf of the state hence lowering the citizens into the position of passive recipients. Tergir continued his speech by rhetorically defining the citizens as the true owners, visionaries and builders of New Erzincan to make them embrace the project with enthusiasm:

> "….this city will be born out of the will of the Nation… it will be constructed by you with a new speed and with new measures and it will be an eternal monument of the Turkish civilization."[273]

After him public works director (nafia müdürü) gave an informative speech in which he explained the works that have been done and gave information about the currently proceeding activities and the ones which would be done in near future.[274]

Following his speech the mourning ceremony started. The large crowd that has been listening the speeches started to march slowly to the cemetery by forming a long parade. The order of the parade was predetermined. Military band was leading the crowd, on both sides police officers and gendarmes were accompanying them. Students were following the band and behind them the bones of an unidentified victim of the earthquake was being carried in a coffin which was wrapped with Turkish and RPP flags. Governor, party inspector, commanders and deputies were machining after the coffin. High officials of the administrative-judicial

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[272] *Yeni Erzincan*, October 15, 1942. "*Sıcak yataklarında ve tatlı uykularında Tabiat kuvvetinin toprağa kalp ettiği Aziz Şehitleri burada hörmet ve huşu ile yad ederim. O felaketin Aziz kurbanlarının ruhu burada kurduğumuz Şehir üzerindedir. Kendi Evlat, Kardeş, Torunlarının meydana getireceği yep yeni yıkılmaz, Millet ve Devlet'in yardımından doğmuş bir şehir olacaktır."*

[273] Ibid. "Kurduğunuz bu şehir… Millet'in iradesinden doğmuş bir mamure olacaktır… Yeni hız ve hamlelerle vücuda getireceğiniz eser, Türk medeniyetinin birer ölmez abideleri olacaktır.

[274] Ibid.

bureaucracy, high ranking soldiers and civil servants were following them. Members of the municipality council and board of administration of the local party organization came after them. Rest of the citizens including engineers, contractors, merchants and shopkeepers constituted the last section of the parade.[275]

The coffin was buried under the martyrs' monument with a religious ceremony. Hafiz Emin Güren recited Quran. After the burial he gave a poignant speech that made everyone cry.[276] He concluded his words by saying: "Oh blessed dead! Sleep with ease and know that citizens of Erzincan will never give martyrs once again like you have done by being careless."[277] This was an indirect reference to the "indestructible" New Erzincan project that Tergin had talked about which would prevent any future disaster. Even in the climax of the mourning the project was reminded and posited as the rational response to the catastrophe of 1939 that should be embraced by all survivors.

Tükel did not give a speech and refrained from putting himself forward neither during the celebration nor during the mourning ceremony. However, every speaker including the hafiz concluded their speeches by declaring their gratitude for his services and efforts. At the end of the day Tükel got what he wanted which was the image of citizens unanimously backing the New Erzincan Project. He conveyed it to İnönü by a short telegram:

> "Today tens of thousands of citizens celebrated the Foundation Day with joy. They declared that they are running behind the directive of creating developed cities in

[275] Ibid.
[276] Ibid.
[277] Ibid. *"Ey mübarek ölüler! Rahat rahat uyuyunuz ve biliniz ki artık Erzincanlılar bir defa daha gaflet yaparak sizin gibi şehitler asla vermeyeceklerdir."*

the East. They sanctified the monument built in the modern cemetery in the name of ones who have lost their lives in the catastrophe"[278]

In spite of the façade of solidarity that they kept during the parade by walking side by side the tension between the governor and party inspector was continuing to grow uninterruptedly. On November 1, 1942 general secretariat sent to Akpınar a copy of the coded letter which Tükel had sent to İnönü and demanded an explanation about the accusations directed against him. Akpınar answered on November 4, 1942 and admitted that he had criticized Kömürcüoğlu's plan in front of the deputies and citizens. He defended himself by claiming that he resorted to this course of action in defense of the public interest based on the experience of the earthquake that happened in 1941 which had destroyed the multistoried Public House building. Since schools and government buildings in Kömürcüoğlu's plan had three stories he claimed that it was his duty to warn the deputies and citizens about the vulnerable nature of these buildings to a potential earthquake.[279] He continued to attack Tükel's administration:

> "…I said these because I do not appreciate any form of ostentation, I was afraid that expenses which would be made to realize this plan would be wasted, I had pity for the nation and state. Furthermore at the time there was not any concrete achievement to be seen in the site anyway, except this embellished album which was being shown to everyone again and again … rather than interpreting my words as an opposition or an obstacle to construction activities he (Tükel) should seek the reasons behind the problems regarding the construction in his greedy and incompetent power. Only a miniscule amount of work was done by local administration in three years by using the aid that country gave with great difficulties"[280]

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[278] Ibid. *"Bugün kadın ve erkek on binlerce Erzincanlı kuruluş bayramını kutladılar. Ve Şark'ta mamureler vücuda getirmek direktifinin arkasından koşmakta olduklarını belirttiler. Ve asri mezarlıkta felakette ölenler namına yapılan müşterek kabir anıdını takdis ettiler."*

[279] BCA.490.01.646.145.1.2.

[280] Ibid., 2-3. *"…demişsem şatafata kıymet vermediğimden yapılacak masrafın heder olmasından korkarak devlete ve millete acıdığımdandır. O vakit zaten herkese ikide birde gösterilen bu süslü albümden başka elde ortada fiili bir şey yoktu… bu sözleri faaliyete birer muhalefet ve engel telakki etmek cidden garip bir haleti ruhiyedir. Bu işlerin sakatlığını burada aramaktansa kendi haris ve beceriksiz kudretinde aramak daha doğru olurdu. Memleketin dişten tırnaktan arttırarak verdiği yardımlarla üç seneden fazla geçen bir zaman zarfında idareci eliyle yapılan faaliyet ölçülürse çok aşikar görülür."*

Contrary to the allegations of Tükel that blamed him for being spokesman for the interests of narrow circles, throughout his letter Akpınar depicted himself as the true defender of the public interest and castigated Tükel for remaining aloof to people's misery by asking rhetorical questions such as:

> "Public pavyons which have been built for approximately one million lira are claimed to be constructed in order to save the public immediately so how can he (Tükel) explain the conditions of eight membered families which live in the rooms of the same pavyons more miserably than before?"[281]

The sheer contrast that he claimed to exist between himself and Tükel was demonstrated in its most crystalized form in these two paragraphs:

> "For three years I have cooperated with all the administrators for the benefit of the country and I helped them. In two provinces and twelve districts I have maintained cooperation and consensus by establishing the true meaning of love and populism on all citizens and civil servants. I have helped and respected the governor who raises complaints about me due to his age and provision. I have made the local party organization work for his success. I have consulted to him about the problems in the province. I protected his status in the eyes of people because he was the representative of the government. I have always prioritized him in the protocol. With the exception of two-three opportunists; the governor could not inspire affection in the public and civil servants either. I joined in the pain of the public that was suffering..."[282]

> "He aroused antipathy in every office and created an environment in opposition to himself. He is a selfish and aristocratic administrator. He does not understand the problems of the public to the extent that he ostracizes them. If his complaint about a party inspector who is very close to the public and completely articulates its soul, is

[281] Ibid., 3. *"Bir milyon liraya yakın bir parayla yapılan halk pavyonları halkı müstacelen kurtarmak için yapıldığı iddia edildiğine göre yine aynı pavyonun her odasında bir az daha sefilane yaşayan sekizer nüfuslu ailelerin vaziyetini ne ile izah ederler?"*

[282] Ibid., 1. *"Üç seneden fazla zamandan beri bulunduğum bölgemde gerek zelzeleden evvel gerekse zelzeleden sonra bütün idare amirleriyle ve memleketin menfaatı nam ve hesabına bütün bu işlerle uğraşanlarla birlikte çalıştım ve onlara müzahir oldum. İki vilayet, on iki kazada istisnasız bütün halk ve memurlar üzerinde sevgi ve Halkçılık mefhumunun bütün manasını tesis ederek tesanüt ve vifak temin ettim. Benden şikayet eden valinin yaşına ve mesleğine hürmet ederek daima yardımcı oldum. Zaman oldu ki muvaffakiyeti için bütün teşkilatı çalıştırdım. Memleket derdini daima istişare ettim. Hükumet mümessili diye halk nazarında daima mevkiini korudum. Teşrifatta kendisini daima takdim ettim. Buna mukabil menfaatçı iki üç kişi istisna edilirse vali ne halkta ve ne de memurlarda sevgi uyandırmamıştır. Memlekette ıztırap gören halkın acısına karıştım…"*

> analyzed thoroughly only the discrete clamor of a panic that has not been successful in its mission would be seen."[283]

Having demonstrated himself as an agreeable partner, Akpınar accused Tükel of having a poor relationship with the party once again like he had mentioned in his earlier reports for numerous times. He stressed that Tükel did not make an attempt talk to him personally about his actions which could potentially put him in a difficult position and neither did he direct his complaints to the general secretariat.[284] The institution which he declared to be "proudly accountable for."[285] "Careless man" he wrote "without carrying out neither a thorough analysis nor an investigation, resorted to this sort of action, expecting from National Leader to give a hasty order."[286] After making this point, he further castigated Tükel's administration and claimed that his political life in Erzincan has virtually come to an end :

> "He did nothing in the province but establishing a passive soulless administration which is currently in paralysis. He is deaf to public's pains and this poor man knows very well there is no way for him to continue to administer this province. He tries to justify himself by making inappropriate complaints and claiming that obstacles put in his way allegedly rendered him unable to work. In these conditions It would be right to pity him more."[287]

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[283] Ibid., 2. "*Devairin her birinde birer sevgisizlik yaratacak kadar kendisine muhalif bir muhit kuran, halkın derdini anlamayarak halkı kovacak kadar kendinde hodbini yaşatan aristokrat bir idare amirinin halka çok yakın ve tamamen halkın ruhuna tercüman olan Parti müfettişine karşı nihayet düşüne düşüne cesaret ede ede söyleyebildiği şikayetin mahiyeti tahlil ve tekik buyurulursa kendi vazifesinde muvaffak olamamış br telaşın gizli yaygarası görülür."*

[284] Ibid., 3.

[285] Ibid. "…alnım açık olarak bağlı olduğum…"

[286] Ibid. *"Fakat gafil adam belki tahkikata ve tetkike lüzum görmeden Sayon Milli Şefimizin derhal emir vereceklerini tahmin ve temsil ederek bu yolu tutmuştur."*

[287] Ibid., 4. *"Memlekette uyuşturucu bir siyasetle miskin ve ruhsuz bir idare tesisine çalışmaktan başka faidesi olmayan, halkın açılarını duyamayacak kadar sağır ve sakıt bulunan ve artık devamı memuriyetinin memleket için bir yol olduğunu kendisi de yakınen anlayan bu zavallının yersiz şikayetlerle kendisine hak verdirmeğe çalışarak ve güya karşısına çıkan engellerle çalışamayacak bir hale geldiğini ifade suretiyle işi halletmeğe çalışmıştır ki bu haliyle kendisine bir az daha acımak doğru olur."*

He concluded his letter by rendering Tükel into a caricature of a self-seeking, cunning and ambitious administrator:

> "…he is afraid of getting retired on age grounds. He has a cautious ambition for his material wealth. He is a farsighted oldman. He is a skillful actor that can successfully hide his true identity."[288]

At the end of the day a binding decision that would put an end to the deadlock in Erzincan did not emerge from this exchange of letters which had been initiated by Tükel to trigger the involvement of third parties from the center. İnönü refrained from getting directly involved in the conflict and assigned this task to the general secretariat which remained passive in taking concrete measures either. Under these conditions where an arbiter was nowhere in sight the tension between Altınok-Akpınar alliance and Tükel continued to grow unrestrainedly.

The chain of events which caused the last remnants of the bonds between two parties to be broken has started with a denunciation made against Rıza Altınok. A man named Faik who had been working in the destroyed Public House as a janitor denounced Altınok to the prosecution (savcılık) claiming that he has been using the furniture recovered from the destroyed Public House in his coffeehouse for commercial purposes.[289] An investigation was conducted by the prosecution and Altınok was put on trial.[290] He was convicted of breach of trust (emniyeti suistimal).[291] As a consequence, Rıza Altınok lost his post as the leader of the local party organization and an extraordinary provincial congress was decided to be held on December 13, 1942 based on the party code.[292] In this congress a retired brigadier named Ziya

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[288] Ibid. *"…tahdidi sinne uğrayacağından endişenak. Fakat bütün bunları göz önünde tutarak dünyalığı için ihtiyatkar bir hırs. Durbin bir ihtiyar. Hakiki hüviyetini muvaffakiyetle saklayabilen usta bir aktör."*
[289] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 66.
[290] Ibid.
[291] Ibid., 67.
[292] BCA.490.01.273.1092.1.10.

Ağca was elected as the new leader.[293] As a result of this, Altınok family's control over the local party organization came to an end. This crippled the influence of Altınoks over the local political life which they had been dominating before the earthquake by controlling the municipality and the local party organization at the same time.

Even though Tükel had no involvement with these developments, his relationship with Akpınar-Altınok alliance worsened due to the high level of mutual distrust. Rıza Altınok was adamantly thinking that Tükel planned a conspiracy against him.[294] The report written by Erzincan deputies Abdülhak Fırat and Şükrü Sökmensüer on December 15, 1942 demonstrates both parties' account of events.[295] Rıza Altınok was claiming that he was protecting the furnitures in his coffeehouse until the reconstruction of the People's House.[296] According to him, Tükel incited Faik to denounce him. However, deputies reported that they have not found any trace of Tükel's involvement stating that Tükel has been talking positively about Rıza Altınok.[297] Tükel even told them that he had suggested Altınok to appeal against the conviction in order to protect his honor and reputation.[298] Rıza Altınok confirmed this.[299i] Deputies put some malevolent people who sought to jeopardize the harmony between the party and the governorate as the instigators of the dispute:

> "They incited Rıza Altınok against the governor to drive a wedge between them. Moreover, the prohibition of construction of houses in the temporary city for permanent use which is being implemented in favor of the New Erzincan increases the resentment against the governor. Due to these reasons, the contact between the governor and party has decreased and harmony was spoilt. Although the party inspector was capable of removing this disharmony no such attempt has been observed on the part of him. Lack of harmony between the administration and party creates huge problems for both

[293] Ibid.
[294] BCA.490.01.273.1092.1.2.
[295] Ibid.
[296] Ibid.
[297] Ibid.
[298] Ibid.
[299] Ibid.

institutions public is very upset about this situation, even duality is emerging among the public including the civil servants.

The strongest side of our regime is the cooperation, sincerity and absolute harmony between the administration and party. It is obvious that things run smoothly in these conditions. When these conditions are not met, complaints follow one another and higher offices become occupied unnecessarily.

The harmony between the administration and party elites should be reconstituted again and it is necessary to take measures which would prevent the continuation of this disharmony."[300]

Up to this point the disharmony between party and local administration was incrementally growing behind closed doors. As remarked by deputies, citizens and civil servants were unavoidably feeling it despite the fact that since its inception, great effort was spent to keep the conflict away from the public eye. For example, despite the hostilities party inspector and governor walked side by side in the parade or Tükel did not get into an argument with Akpınar in front of the citizens when he was publicly castigating Kömürcüoğlu's plan. However, this sensitivity was abandoned when the provincial party congress was held. Tükel chose to not attend the congress even though he was invited.[301] This explicitly put into display that the bonds between the governorate and party were completely broken. Akpınar accentuated this in his report on January 13, 1943 by stating that:

"Governor did not participate to the congress even though he was invited… there is no agreement between the officials-civil servants of the administration in central

[300] Ibid., 3. *"Muvakkat şehirde temelli ve daimi inşaat zaruri olarak ve Yeni Erzincan lehinde olarak müsaade olunmaması da vali hakkındaki güceniklikleri arttırmıştır. Bu sebeplerle vali ile parti arasındaki temaslar azalmış ve ahenk bozulmuştur. Bu ahenksizliğin parti müfettişi tarafından ortadan kaldırılması mümkün iken bu yolda herhangi bir hareket sezilmemiştir. Parti ile idare arasında ahenk olmayan yerlerde ıstırap her iki müessese için de büyük oluyor ve bu durumdan halk müteessir hatta memurlar da dahil olmak üzere halk arasında ikilik baş göstermektedir.*
Bizim rejimimizde en kuvvetli taraf parti ile idare arasında iş birliği, samimilik ve tam bir ahenktir bu şekilde ahenkli yürüyen merkezlerde işlerin de yolunda gittiği aşikardır. Aksi takdirde şikayetler birbirini takip ediyor ve yüksek makamlar beyhude yere işgal edilmiş oluyor.
İdare ile parti ileri gelenleri arasındaki ahengin tekrar ve sağlam olarak kurulması ve bu ahenksizliğin devamına mani tedbirlerin alınmasını zaruri olduğunu arz ederim."
[301] Ibid., 11.

district and our organization. Not attaching value to the local party organization and behaving like a despotic administrator are the customs of the contemporary governor of Erzincan. Public is very exhausted-worried."[302]

With the nonattendance of Tükel to the congress, the disharmony became so visible that it could not be ignored like it was done before by İnönü and the general secretariat. Harmony had to be reestablished by the involvement of upper institutions like it has been demanded by deputies in their report. Under these conditions, election of the new leader who was not a member of the Altınoks, could be an opportunity to make a fresh start. Party inspector Akpınar who has been criticized by the deputies due to his failure in ending the disharmony, could have been transferred elsewhere and governorate-party relations could have started with a clean slate. However, Rıza Altınok and Muzaffer Akpınar were not the sole reason behind the disharmony as remarked by deputies.

Tükel's uncompromising support for the New Erzincan project was making him adamant in enforcing the prohibition of construction in the temporary city. This prohibition was constituting the bulk of the complaints directed at the local party organization. Tükel's refusal to answer these complaints by relaxing the prohibition was rendering local party organization an obsolete institution in the eyes of people. Not seeing any concrete change regarding the causes of their complaints, the prestige of the party was decreasing among the people and this was making the local party organization to take a hostile stance towards the governor.

Complaints of the citizens could be ended hence the harmony between local party organization and local administration could be reestablished either by building New Erzincan

[302] Ibid., 10-11. *"Vilayet kongresine vali davet edildiği halde gelmemiş… Vilayet merkezinde hükumet amir ve memurlarıyla teşkilatımız arasında anlaşma yoktur. Partiye kıymet vermemek ve müstebit idare amiri gibi hareket etmek bugünkü Erzincan valisinin şiarıdır. Halk çok bizardır."*

and keeping Tükel in his place or by relaxing the prohibition and removing him. In the latter option, New Erzincan project would be reduced into a bureaucratic settlement composed of governmental buildings and with the construction of numerous low-quality buildings in the hands of citizens in the temporary city exact same conditions would be recreated for a potential catastrophe to emerge in near future. On the other hand, following the first option required an uninterrupted economic support for the project and resilient political support for Tükel from the government in the face of pressures of local party organization and citizens.

Despite the promises that have been made by Saraçoğlu during his visit to Erzincan, his economic support for the project proved to be negligible compared to his predecessor. The second portion of the loan which should have been sent in the winter of 1943 was not sent, the deal with Germany has not materialized. Therefore like the previous year precious winter months for storing the construction materials in advance were wasted. Such decisions taken in the economic sphere were brought to their logical conclusion with the renunciation of Saraçoğlu government to give political support to Tükel. He was retired by the Ministry of Interior on March 23,1943.[303] Tükel explained his dismissal as a result of the "sacrifice the rook, checkmate the king" tactic used by the prime minister.[304] "However," he added "one who would be checkmated was New Erzincan" in order to underline the prioritization of the short-term political exigencies by the government in the expense of long term benefits in taking this decision.[305] Tükel criticized Saraçoğlu cabinet with these words:

> "The cabinet that came after Refik Saydam could not understand public's desire and its will. They could not feel the need to construct New Erzincan. To put it precisely

[303] BCA.490.01.101.17.16.1.
[304] Sükuti Tükel, Yeni Erzincan, 95. *"Başvekilin de satranç oyunlarında kullanılan "Kaleyi defa, Şahı mat" oyununda kullandığı muhakeme yüzünden vali tekaüde sevkedildi."*
[305] Ibid. *"Fakat mat olan ancak Yeni Erzincan şehri idi."*

the ones who came did not like the things that had been done but they could not do better."[306]

The intensity of public's desire and will for the lagging New Erzincan project may not have been as high as Tükel has described since citizens were wanting to improve their poor life standards as soon as possible by demanding to build their own houses immediately. However, it is certain that New Erzincan was not the priority of the new government. Saraçoğlu government was not inclined to bestow long-term economic and political support to the project. Therefore, Tükel was chosen as the "rook" to be sacrificed in order to reconstitute the harmony between local party organization and local administration at the local level in short-term.

Tükel's dismissal de facto brought an end to the project because after him no political actor emerged again at the local level who would demand from the government to allocate the necessary political and economic support for the project as incessantly and vigorously as he had done before. New governor Dilaver Argun who was appointed by Saraçoğlu government to restore the lost harmony, chose to act in accordance with the short-term vision of the citizens and bow to their demands instead of opposing them for sake of their own long-term benefit like his predecessor had adamantly done at the cost of his political career in Erzincan.

Argun managed to meet with the expectations of government. As stated by Salih Başotaç, in his report written on February 24, 1944 he succeeded in winning public's affection and reconstituted the harmony with the local party organization.[307] He achieved this success

[306] Ibid., 96. *"…rahmetli Refik Saydam'dan sonra gelen kabine erkanının milletin arzusunu ve iradesini anlayamamaları, Yeni Erzincan şehrinin meydana gelmesindeki lüzumu hissedememeleri, daha doğrusu gelenlerin, gidenlerin yaptıklarını beğenmemeleri, fakat daha iyisini de yapmamaları hastalığında aramak gerekir."*
[307] BCA.490.01.647.148.1.74.

primarily by turning a blind eye to the constructions in the temporary city.[308] As a result of this policy the city of Erzincan started to grow from the temporary city and this trend persisted until 1959 when prohibition of construction started to be implemented again.[309] Democrat Party government did not destroy the existing houses in temporary city.[310] On the contrary, title deeds were given to their owners and they were included in the zoning plan of the city.[311]

Allowing people to construct their houses on their own in the temporary city, however, by itself proved to be insufficient in solving the housing crisis in Erzincan. Still many citizens especially the ones who were living in Kızılay neighborhood could not afford to build even the most primitive type of houses, they were dependent on government's support to have accommodation.[312] Both the RPP and DP answered to this problem by building adobe houses which unlike pavyons in the Kızılay neighborhood were detached from one another. 200 adobe houses were built between 1948-49 and an additional 49 of them were built in 1951.[313] Poor families were sheltered in these houses and dismal living conditions in the packed pavyons of Kızılay neighborhood were alleviated to a certain extent.[314]

Between 1943-59 city steadily grew albeit in a disorganized fashion from the temporary city. During this period only a single large-scale attempt was made to reverse this trend and encourage citizens to settle outside of the temporary city. As a response to Democrat Party's heavy critiques and in order to raise votes in the upcoming elections, prime minister Günaltay who was also a deputy of Erzincan introduced a plan in 1949 which included the importation

[308] Erdem Yavuz, 1939 Depremi, 107.
[309] Ibid., 139.
[310] Ibid.
[311] Ibid.
[312] BCA.490.01.647.148.1.76.
[313] Fatih Orhan, Depremin Erzincan, 350.
[314] Ibid.

of prefabric houses from Austria.[315] These houses would be erected on the construction site of the abandoned New Erzincan project.[316] Initially it was planned to build 3000 prefabric houses.[317] However, only 600 houses could be erected because most of the citizens hesitated to buy them due to their high price.[318]

In short, ten years after the catastrophe, Erzincan was far from being a modern developed city as had been envisioned by Saydam government. It was resembling a hodgepodge composed of prefabric houses adobe pavyons and low-quality houses made by citizens themselves. Prefabric houses were scattered across the construction site, remaining detached from the temporary city where majority of the population lived and they did not have access to water, electricity or paved roads.[319] These deficiencies further discouraged citizens to move out of the temporary city where resources were concentrated. As a result of this, number of low-quality houses which were highly vulnerable to a potential earthquake increased and city continued to grow in an uncontrolled fashion.

6. Conclusion

Almost every destruction is followed by attempts at reconstruction. No matter how tempting it is to attribute a devastating catastrophe such as the 1939 Erzincan Earthquake to an omnipotent divine force, thanks to science of geology, we know that even the cataclysmic seismic forces that initiated the Erzincan earthquake were bounded by certain limits based on various material factors. Much like the forces behind the destruction, the force behind the attempts of reconstruction, the single party regime of the time, was subject to limitations as

[315] Erdem Yavuz, 1939 Depremi, 107.
[316] Ibid.
[317] Fatih Orhan, Depremin Erzincan, 352.
[318] Ibid.
[319] Erdem Yavuz, 1939 Depremi, 127.

well. Due to its overarching control over the economy, domination of political life and increasing monopolization of social life since the Third Congress of Republican People's Party, the single-party regime tends to be seen as an omnipotent force. However, it had its limits which became apparent when It failed to undertake a task as ambitious as building a new city from scratch in Erzincan. Ascribing this failure just to external factors, which were out of the control of the single party regime such as the Second World War, only partially explains the story. The limits which prevented it to materialize New Erzincan were not solely external, but also emanated from the very feature that made this regime so unique in Turkish nation state's history: the relationship between state and party. This uneasy relationship was far from being smooth unlike what is often tend to be envisioned. On the contrary throughout the 1930s it kept being subject to intense contestations which were accompanied with serious conflicts and tensions.

Until the beginning of the 1930s party's activities were essentially confined to the sphere of parliament. Diffusing the Republican ideals and principles among the common people including the ones living in the remotest parts of the country was not set as an objective. In this environment, local party organizations were devoid of the necessary means to play an active role in the political life at the local level. The Third Congress of RPP which was held in May 1931 under the shadow of socio-economic crisis caused by the Great Depression and reactionary uprisings, marked a break with this low-profile role of the party. The party was redesigned as a two-way functioning mechanism in order to overcome the legitimacy crisis which the single party regime was increasingly plunging into. Party would collect and transmit to the state bureaucracy the demands and complaints of citizens and in return, would diffuse the Republican principles across the country through the local party organizations and newly founded complementary institutions such the People's Houses. A large cadre had to be recruited

to these institutions which were being rapidly established all over the country. Not surprisingly, local elites who were the most influential and respected members of their communities rushed to take seats in them.

These elites who were belonging to influential local families, had been already competing with each other to control key institutions such as the municipalities of their towns and cities. They welcomed these new coming institutions as new objectives worth competing for. Obviously, they did not want to acquire seats in the board of administration of local party organizations or People's Houses due to their boundless enthusiasm for spreading Republican principles and ideals. They were striving for more influence in order to surpass their local rivals and increase their social benefits. Once they managed to gain the control of local party organizations, they did not hesitate to use the power that they have derived from the party for their own family's advantage.

They were eager to push the boundary between the state and party which had been loosely drawn in the party code in order to impose pressure on the local bureaucracy for securing and expanding of their own interests. These infringements of local elites vis-a-vis local bureaucratic institutions raised concerns among higher echelons of state bureaucracy. In order to end the ambiguities between the spheres of influence of party and state which were providing room of maneuver for these elites to impose pressure on the local bureaucracy, unification of party and state was declared in 1936. As a result of this measure, the office of party inspectorship was abolished, governors became the head of local party organizations hence they were formally rendered subservient to the local state bureaucracy. After three years, seeing the decreasing efficacy of local party branches in fulfilling their role as two-way functioning mechanisms, party and state were separated again. However, the new party code reproduced

the unclear nature of party-state relations of the pre-unification period. For example, newly restored party inspectors were allowed to make commentary on the performance of local administrations and criticize them.

During this period of transition, the Altınok family which had been controlling the municipality of Erzincan more than fifteen years, managed to form an alliance with the newly appointed party inspector Muzaffer Akpınar and with his help regained the control of the local party organization that they had lost three years ago due to the unification of party and state. Before December 27, 1939, the political atmosphere in Erzincan resembled the ideal case which a powerful family would wish to achieve in its home province. Controlling both the municipality and local party organization, keeping a strong alliance with the party inspector and having no rival family that could possibly threaten their position, Altınoks' domination over Erzincan's political life seemed to be secured in the foreseeable future under normal conditions. However, the catastrophic earthquake which decimated the physical environment, shook the political life in the city of Erzincan to its core as well. In the extraordinary conditions created by the disaster, Altınoks' newly restored political monopoly crumbled like a house of cards.

In the aftermath of the earthquake Altınoks lost the control of municipality and Sükuti Tükel was appointed as the new governor-mayor of Erzincan. The unusual character of this new political actor emerged not only from the extraordinary powers that he was equipped with, but also the close governmental support that he enjoyed. He was assigned with the task of leading the efforts of construction of a new city by the prime minister Refik Saydam. Although Altınoks retained their control over the local party organization and their ally party inspector

Akpınar was continuing to keep his post, it was evident that governor-mayor Tükel would not be an easy target to put pressure on by using the power that they have derived from the party.

The inadequacy of their leverage over governor Tükel became visible when the head of the local party organization Rıza Altınok lost the lucrative construction material contract of the New Erzincan project in June 1942. Despite the pressure imposed by Rıza Altınok and party inspector Akpınar, Tükel refused to intervene to protect Altınoks' interests. This marked the beginning of the animosity of Altınok family against Tükel. Akpınar had personal disputes with Tükel as well. He had been severely criticizing Tükel's administration in his previous inspection reports, going as far as unfoundedly accusing him of assisting a criminal network that operated within the municipality and the governorate.

The first measure that Altınok-Akpınar alliance resorted to in their campaign against Tükel, was directing false accusations against him regarding the provision of cereals in the province in an inspection report. Failing to get the reaction that they have expected from the government, Altınok-Akpınar alliance changed their objective and started to publicly campaign against the New Erzincan project drawn by architect Asım Kömürcüoğlu. This was detrimental to the project which was already in a precarious position due to the poor progress recorded in the summer of 1942. This insufficient performance was directly related with the belated transfer of the first portion of the budget which was promised to be sent before the winter of 1942 but transferred as late as May 1942. Apart from the belated transfer of the budget that clearly demonstrated the bureaucratic inflexibility of the Ministry of Finance, only a fraction of it was sent. As a result, the necessary construction materials which were scarce to be found could not be stored in advance for the short construction period in the summer.

Tükel was the primary promoter of this project at the local level, therefore heavy critiques of Altınok-Akpınar alliance in which the wholesale revision of the project was demanded, were agitating the ordinary citizens and increasing the pressure on him. Tükel had been already raising the discontent of ordinary citizens due to his uncompromising enforcement of the prohibition of any construction activity aimed to build permanent dwellings in the temporary city. Unable to construct their houses on their own, citizens were effectively forced to keep living in harsh conditions. Although the New Erzincan project was promising modern houses which would provide high living standards and protection from future earthquakes, people wanted to increase their living standards immediately on their own. The Altınok-Akpınar alliance's discrediting campaign against Kömürcüoğlu's New Erzincan project which started In the aftermath of the end of worryingly unproductive first construction period, provoked ordinary citizens against Tükel and caused his already low popularity to further deplete.

Staggering as it is, the head of the local party organization and party inspector which were supposed to harmoniously cooperate with the local bureaucracy did completely the opposite. Rather than devoting all the means available to the local party organization to make propaganda in favor of the project aimed to increase the trust of impatient citizens, they systematically increased the doubts of citizens for the sake of decreasing the popularity of Tükel. Apart from increasing the pressure on the governor within the city, Akpınar used every opportunity to denigrate Tükel's administration in his reports to discredit him in the eyes of newly established Saraçoğlu government. He portrayed him as a despot who remains totally aloof to the people's demands, most urgent of them being the permission to build their own houses in the temporary city. However, it was clear that allowing people to construct their own houses would have downgraded New Erzincan to a bureaucratic settlement.

Moreover, Akpınar kept claiming that as people saw their demands were being ignored by the governor, the prestige of the party to whom they asked solutions for their demands was decreasing in their eyes. So, in Akpınar's reports Tükel was depicted not only as a stubborn despotic administrator but also a threat to the harmony between the local bureaucracy and local party organization. He was arousing the antipathy of the members of the local party organization because the local party organization was starting to be seen as an obsolete institution by the citizens as a result his uncompromising enforcement of the construction prohibition.

Tükel tried to regain back the trust of people to the project by organizing a founding day for New Erzincan in which celebratory speeches were delivered regarding the project and citizens were informed about the currently proceeding activities and the ones which would be done in near future. This was accompanied with the opening ceremony of a new cemetery and a martyrs' monument in which people who had lost their lives in the earthquake were commemorated. However, his efforts remained in vain. The last remnants of the bonds between him and the Altınkok-Akpınar alliance were broken when Rıza Altınok was deposed from his post on legal grounds. Rıza Altınok accused him of designing a conspiracy against him and Tükel did not attend the provincial congress of the party since the second partner of the alliance (Akpınar) formed against him was still retaining his post. The total lack of harmony between the local party organization and local bureaucracy alarmed even the deputies of Erzincan in the Grand National Assembly and the intervention of government was asked by them. Rather than transferring Akpınar to another province the Saraçoğlu government answered to these calls by retiring Tükel. Newly appointed governor Dilaver Argun turned a blind eye to the constructions in temporary city and the harmony between state and party at the local level was eventually

restored. As Tükel put it in his memoirs, he was sacrificed as the rook but the one who has been checkmated was actually New Erzincan.

This was the consequence of the political cul de sac that has been reached in Erzincan due to the turbulent party-state relations created by the clash between Altınok-Akpınar alliance and Tükel. If Tükel had kept his post and therefore prohibition of construction had continued to be enforced, New Erzincan project would have proceeded, but the party-state harmony would have continued to remain in a precarious state. If Tükel had been ousted and new governor had chosen not to enforce the prohibition of construction, the harmony in party-state relations would have been reinstated at the expense of New Erzincan project which required the enforcement of the prohibition of construction to succeed. Saraçoğlu government which had already shown its reluctance to support the project by not transferring the second portion of the budget in the winter of 1943, chose to retire Tükel in March 1943 and the project has been effectively cancelled by this measure. Nevertheless, it would be inaccurate to argue that restoration of the harmony in party-state relations in Erzincan was the only concern of Saraçoğlu government in cancelling the project. However, it definitely played a significant role in the decision-making process as an unignorable factor.

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