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ARTICLE

The Sarajevo Tobacco Factory Strike of 1906: Empire and the Nature of Late Habsburg Rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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Abstract

In May 1906, the Habsburg protectorate of Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced an unprecedented level of labor unrest. The discussions between civil servants and workers that arose from these events, in particular those that occurred during the strike at the government-owned Sarajevo Tobacco Factory, provide a key point of departure from which to explore the character of Habsburg rule in Bosnia. This article examines how late Habsburg imperial rule functioned in Bosnia by analyzing moments of apparent bureaucratic irregularity in order to suggest a different interpretation of Habsburg administrative practice. It argues that in the case of the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory, the relationship between subjects of the Habsburg empire and its administrators was characterized by processes of debate and discussion that were in many ways grounded in concerns about fairness. This observation opens up new questions about the broader relationship between the Austro-Hungarian administration and the people it governed.

Keywords: Habsburg empire; Bosnia and Herzegovina; social history

Introduction

On the afternoon of May 3, 1906, an unnamed woman employed at the local tobacco factory stood before the government commissioner for the city of Sarajevo and declared: "You must let our comrades go or else imprison all 800 of us girls!"[1] What started out as a relatively innocuous wage movement by the one hundred or so women of the factory's packaging department had quickly grown into a mass demonstration. News of the episode in Sarajevo soon spread to Bosnia and Herzegovina's[2] towns and villages, and by the end of the month workers had organized industrial actions in nineteen different localities. Historians would later refer to these disputes collectively as the "May strikes" or "the general strike of Bosnia and Herzegovina." Although strikes had been recorded in Bosnia prior to 1906, most notably during the previous year when eight strikes took place largely in

[1] The commissioner reported the original as "Morate nama drugarice pustiti ili nas sve 800 djevojaka zatvoriti!" but also provided his own translation in German: "Wollen Sie unsere Genossinnen frei lassen, oder uns alle Mädchen einsperren!" Government Commissioner Zarzycki to Provincial Government, report, May 5, 1906, no. 42, in *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, ed. and trans. Kasim Isović, vol. 1 (Sarajevo: Arhiv Narodne Republike Bosne i Hercegovine, 1963), 110.

[2] Although the territory was called Bosnia and Herzegovina, I refer to it as Bosnia for the sake of editorial clarity unless otherwise specified.

connection with the union movement, the events of May 1906 stand out in terms of the sheer number of industrial actions as well as the fact that a wider variety of social actors participated in them.[3] From the mines of Vareš, to the forests near Zavidovići, women and men called for higher wages and better working conditions. In many places, peasants, students, and politicians joined in the demonstrations. Back in Sarajevo on May 3, just beyond the steps of the city hall, between 2,000 and 3,000 people waited to hear what the Habsburg administrator had to say in reply to the shouts of the unnamed woman. Out of sight, but still very much interested, the factory's managers also awaited his reply. How would the imperial and royal Habsburg government respond to the strike?

Traditionally, scholars have interpreted the events of May 1906 as the moment in which Bosnia's working class officially entered the scene as an actor in its own right.[4] The ability of workers across the entire territory to organize strikes and make coordinated demands of their employers marked an important milestone in their development as a social class defined by their shared interests. But this month of intense labor activism was also a moment of critical interaction between the Habsburg monarchy and the people it governed. Given the magnitude of the events as well as the potential threat of unrest, administrators at all levels were compelled to respond to the strikes both in their capacity as civil servants and because the regime itself owned and operated a number of industrial enterprises, including the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory. Throughout May 1906 the strikers often called on administrators to intervene in the disputes, looking to them to ensure that workers' concerns were duly acknowledged and adequately addressed. The discussions between administrators and workers on the one hand and the administrators and factory managers on the other provide a key point of departure from which to examine the character of Habsburg rule in Bosnia. Indeed, a close reading of these interactions significantly complicates our current understanding of Austro-Hungarian governance in the territory.

Historians have assessed the nature of Habsburg rule in Bosnia in a number of ways. The first interpretation saw the imposition of the administration in terms of absolutist rule: local people should find contentment in religious and cultural organizations, but not by participating in administration or politics.[5] Such a dominating role for the regime was justified in terms of a civilizing mission, through which the monarchy would allegedly bring cultural uplift and economic progress to Bosnia. In practice, administrators pursued a form of bureaucratic centralization, but only succeeded slowly and unevenly in extending their control throughout the territory. The same historians interpreted the later years of the occupation in terms of a mild liberalization that permitted limited forms of cultural and/or national autonomy and political activity. The annexation of the territory in 1908, in particular, marked an important legal turning point as it enabled the declaration of a Bosnian constitution and the formation of an elected diet in 1910. Building on this understanding of the goals and practices of the Habsburg administration, later historians sought to define and analyze the policies, institutions, and practices of this civilizing mission in more precise terms.[6] The introduction of postcolonial approaches to the study of Habsburg Bosnia stressed further the importance of cultural politics to Austro-Hungarian practices of administration.[7]

[3] Iljas Hadžibegović, *Postanak radničke klase u Bosni i Hercegovini i njen razvoj do 1914. godine* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1980), 291.

[4] See Hadžibegović, *Postanak radničke klase u Bosni i Hercegovini i njen razvoj do 1914. godine*, and Sergije Elaković, *Generalni štrajk 1906 godine u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Belgrade: RAD, 1951).

[5] Tomislav Kraljačić, *Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini (1882–1903)* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1987), and Robert J. Donia, *Islam under the Double Eagle: The Muslims of Bosnia and Hercegovina, 1878–1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

[6] Robin Okey, *Taming Balkan Nationalism: The Habsburg "Civilizing Mission" in Bosnia, 1878–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[7] See Clemens Ruthner and Tamara Scheer, *Bosnien-Herzegowina und Österreich-Ungarn, 1878–1918. Annäherungen an eine Kolonie* (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2018); Diana Reynolds-Cordileone, "Displaying Bosnia: Imperialism, Orientalism, and Exhibitionary Cultures in Vienna and Beyond: 1878–1918," *Austrian History Yearbook* 46 (2015):

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This work challenged the idea that the civilizing mission had been a mere superficial overlay to justify Habsburg rule to the outside world. Instead, these historians explored the ways in which cultural representations of Bosnia, relying on Orientalist motifs, actually constructed and affirmed Habsburg difference and dominance both within and beyond the boundaries of the administration.

Some historians assert that Habsburg rule was not merely justified by cultural arguments, but that in fact Bosnia was a colony of Austria-Hungary.[8] Such arguments rest partly on older economic histories of Habsburg Bosnia that framed the economic relationship between Austria and Bosnia as essentially a colonial one. Despite differentiating between Austrian and Hungarian approaches to ruling the territory, these historians argue that Austrian business circles at least viewed Bosnia as a source of raw materials and as a potential market for their finished goods.[9] More recent interpretations of the colonial relationship, however, seek to move beyond purely economic arguments. Advocates of the newer approach additionally emphasize that both the official discourse of Habsburg rule in Bosnia as well as individual depictions of the territory and its people were particularly laden with Orientalist tropes that evoked the alleged dichotomy between "civilization" and "barbarism."[10] The degree to which this was a unique characteristic of the Habsburg project in Bosnia, however, has been called into question. A number of historians, including Maureen Healy, have pointed out that the occupation of Bosnia was not the first time Habsburg statesmen deployed the idea of a civilizing mission in a state-building context.[11] As Larry Wolff demonstrates in the case of Galicia, proponents of the Habsburg state-building project had begun to use ideas of civilization alongside invented dynastic claims as a way to imagine and create a unified Habsburg state since at least the eighteenth century.[12] How this legacy informed (or not) the Habsburg project as it was carried out on the ground in Bosnia remains an open question. Nevertheless, adherents of the colonial approach argue it was Habsburg economic and cultural politics, coupled with the presence of an asymmetric legal–political relationship between the monarchy and its Bosnian subjects, that produced a colonial, or quasi-colonial, experience.

The debates outlined previously have undoubtedly enriched our understanding of Habsburg cultural politics in Bosnia as well as our understanding of specific institutions and their workings. Yet, when administrative practices deviated from the logic of these claims, be they about state control or civilizational difference, scholars have tended to see these as exceptional irregularities that require further explanation. For example, concessions

29–50; Clemens Ruthner, Diana Reynolds-Cordileone, Ursula Reber, and Raymond Detrez, *WechselWirkungen. Austria-Hungary, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the Western Balkans, 1878–1918* (New York: Peter Lang, 2015); and Johannes Feichtinger, Ursula Prutsch, and Moritz Csáky, *Habsburg Postcolonial: Machtstrukturen und kollektives Gedächtnis* (Innsbruck: StudienVerlag, 2003).

[8] Clemens Ruthner, "Bosnien-Herzegowina als k.u.k. Kolonie. Eine Einführung," in *Bosnien-Herzegowina und Österreich-Ungarn, 1878–1918*, ed. Ruthner and Scheer (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2018), 15–44, and Robert J. Donia, "'Proximate Colony'. Bosnien-Herzegowina unter österreichisch-ungarischer Herrschaft," in *Bosnien-Herzegowina und Österreich-Ungarn, 1878–1918*, 147–62.

[9] See Dževad Juzbašić, "Neke karakteristike privrednog razvitka Bosne i Hercegovine u periodu od 1878. do 1914. godine," in *Politika i privreda u Bosni i Hercegovini pod Austrougarskom upravom*, ed. Advo Sućeska (Sarajevo: Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, 2002), 146–50. Amila Kasumović, in particular, argues that claims of economic exploitation are unfounded and that Austro-Hungarian trade policy was understood more in terms of reciprocity between the monarchy and Bosnia as well as the latter's integration. See Amila Kasumović, *Austrougarska trgovinska politika u Bosni i Hercegovini 1878–1914* (Sarajevo: Udruženje za modernu historiju, 2016).

[10] Clemens Ruthner, *Habsburgs, Dark Continent'. Postkoloniale Lektüren zur österreichischen Literatur und Kultur im langen 19. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2018), 205–36.

[11] Healy also underscores the importance of reading both Habsburg and Ottoman perspectives alongside one another when considering the question of a civilizing mission in Bosnia. See Maureen Healy, "Europe on the Sava: Austrian Encounters with 'Turks' in Bosnia," *Austrian History Yearbook* 51 (2020): 3–4.

[12] See Larry Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia: History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).

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made to local activists that seemed to stand in contrast to the regime's general approach to nationalist politics are often framed as decisions that were ultimately made in the interest of preserving Habsburg control.[13] What if instead we treated such moments of apparent inconsistency as important indications of another kind of rule?

This article examines how late Habsburg imperial rule functioned in Bosnia by focusing precisely on such allegedly exceptional examples in order to suggest a different interpretation of Habsburg administrative practice. To do so, I analyze interactions between workers and administrators during a moment of critical social conflict, namely the strike at the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory from April 30 to May 7, 1906. Though this specific episode occurred twenty-eight years after the initial Habsburg occupation of Bosnia, and thus is preceded by nearly three decades of dynamic administrative practice, the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory strike is an important case for understanding governance in the later years of the administration. As an example of how civil servants and women workers interacted on the ground, the events of May 1906 allow us to make certain generalizations about how the administration as a whole functioned and opens up new questions about the entire period of Austro-Hungarian rule in the territory.

Building on the approaches of new imperial history, I take as my starting point the idea that Habsburg administrators turned to context-specific strategies when it came to governing and especially to managing social conflict.[14] In other words, civil servants made choices that corresponded to both the broader and more immediate circumstances in which they happened to find themselves. Through a close reading of the event, I explore how both civil servants and the strikers understood the conflict as well as their relationship to one another, before moving on to consider the ways in which the bureaucrats ultimately sought to resolve the dispute. In particular, I examine the actions and perspectives of local women workers and show that they were often active participants in, and even initiators of, debates about the role of Habsburg administrators. Tracing these discussions up and down the administrative hierarchy, and thus employing a multi-scalar approach, provides a complex picture of practices of governance on the ground. I demonstrate that in this moment, issues of imperial rule were in many ways open-ended. Moreover, I argue that this case has significant implications for how we understand the broader nature of Habsburg rule in Bosnia.

The following analysis is based on a close reading of reports produced by administrators in Sarajevo and Vienna during the tense weeks from April 30 to May 12 and their follow-up from June to August 1906. Additionally, I rely on the testimonies the women workers gave during the investigation.[15] These sources were compiled and published in two volumes in the 1960s, and are part of a larger series of edited volumes that published source material from the Habsburg period regarding issues of labor, workers' movements, and social democracy.[16] At the time, the volumes were likely intended to demonstrate the historical continuity of the working class and working-class activism in Bosnia with the later Yugoslav labor movement. However, using these sources to explore questions of Habsburg rule rather than

[13] For example, Kraljačić argues that in the 1890s the Habsburg administration began to make a number of concessions to Serbian national activists in order to avoid unrest that might threaten public order and the administration's legitimacy. See Kraljačić, *Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini (1882–1903)*, 150–70 and 174–86.

[14] Pieter M. Judson, *The Habsburg Empire: A New History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), and Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010).

[15] The testimonies were transcribed by civil servants in the local South Slavic variant.

[16] The sources are published in the original languages (predominantly German) along with Serbo-Croatian translations written in the Latin script. For my analysis I use the original German and South Slavic transcriptions. I would like to thank Valentina Ivcec and Mersada Gewessler for their assistance with the South Slavic sources, as well as Silke Tork for her help with those in German. Any translation errors appearing here are my own. Kasim Isović, ed. and trans., *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, vol. 1 (Sarajevo: Arhiv Narodne Republike Bosne i Hercegovine, 1963), and Kasim Isović, ed. and trans., *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, vol. 2 (Sarajevo: Arhiv Socijalističke Republike Bosne i Hercegovine, 1966). The archive also published individual edited volumes for the years 1878–1905, 1907, 1908, 1909, 1910, and 1911.

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the origins of a working-class movement allows us to go beyond the narrative of Bosnian history that the editors of these volumes implicitly or explicitly sought to create.

The Bosnian Tobacco Monopoly as a Nexus of State and Society

From the start, the very nature of the Austro-Hungarian presence in Bosnia was institutionally ambiguous. With the reorganization of the empire as a dual monarchy in 1867, there was no single common Habsburg government or administration that could undertake the task of administering this newly acquired protectorate. What then was the administrative structure of the occupied territory to look like?[17] Although initially this question generated a significant amount of discussion, particularly among the heads of the imperial ministries, it is important to acknowledge that these debates were not necessarily unique. As Hannes Grandits points out, discussions regarding administrative reforms, the role of the military, and state centralization in particular had been ongoing in Bosnia and Herzegovina under Ottoman rule since the mid-nineteenth century.[18] Ultimately, Habsburg statesmen opted to adapt the monarchy's existing structures to accommodate the occupation and placed Bosnia under the direct control of one of Austria-Hungary's three common ministries, the Joint Ministry of Finance (*Gemeinsames Finanzministerium/Közös pénzügyminisztérium*), which was located in Vienna. The Joint Minister of Finance was given the occupation portfolio.[19] István Burián von Rajecz (1851–1922), who held the office during the period covered by this article (1903–1912), exercised near ultimate authority over the Bosnian administration. In Sarajevo, the Provincial Government (*Landesregierung/Zemaljska vlada*) functioned as the main administrative body on the ground. Its civilian leader, the *Civil Adlatus*, acted as intermediary between the administration in Bosnia and Vienna. By the time of the strikes in May 1906, Isidor Benko von Boinik (1846–1925) had occupied the position for almost two years (since 1904) and continued to do so until its abolition in 1912. Though the administration was structured hierarchically with the Viennese ministry at its head, Habsburg policies were often shaped by a multi-directional flow of information between the Provincial Government and the Joint Ministry of Finance.[20]

Over time, as the administration became more established and expanded its scope of activity, the number of administrators in its service grew. Tomislav Kraljačić calculated that whereas in 1883 the Provincial Government and its two subordinate units (the county/*Kreis/okrug* and the district/*Bezirk/kotar*) employed a combined total of 470 civil servants, by 1902 this number had grown to nearly 1,612.[21] The day-to-day realities of governing largely fell to these men, the majority of whom came from Austria or Hungary rather than from Bosnia. For example, of the 1,850 provincial administrators in 1902, 54.59 percent

[17] For an overview of the initial military administration (1878–1882), see Hamdija Kapidžić, *Hercegovački ustanak 1882. godine* (Sarajevo: Vaselin Masleša, 1958), 21–29. On Joint Minister of Finance Benjamin Kállay's arguments regarding the need for a civil rather than a military administration and his subsequent reforms, see Kraljačić, *Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini (1882–1903)*, 430–34.

[18] See Hannes Grandits, *Herrschaft und Loyalität in der spätosmanischen Gesellschaft. Das Beispiel der multikonfessionellen Herzegowina* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag GmbH & Co., 2008). On administrative reform in Ottoman Bosnia, see Ahmed Aličić, *Uređenje bosanskog ejaleta od 1789. do 1878. godine* (Sarajevo: Sarajevo Orijentalni Institut, 1983).

[19] A Bosnian bureau was formed within the ministry in order to manage the occupation as early as 1878 and was later reorganized in 1892 in accordance with the structures of the Provincial Government. See Kraljačić, *Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini (1882–1903)*, 436.

[20] Kasumović, in particular, explores the idea of center and periphery in Bosnia and the question as to whether the Provincial Government merely executed orders from Vienna. See Kasumović, *Austrougarska trgovinska politika u Bosni i Hercegovini 1878–1914*, 29.

[21] It is possible that in reality these numbers may have been slightly higher or lower since Kraljačić drew from those published in the calendar *Bošnjak* for the years 1883 and 1902 rather than internal government documents. This was likely due to a lack of consistent official statistics needed to make such a comparison because he later cites a report by the Provincial Government from 1902 in order to further analyze the composition of the administration. See Kraljačić, *Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini (1882–1903)*, 437–38.

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(1,010) were from Austria, 29.51 percent (546) were from Hungary, and 15.68 percent (290) were from Bosnia.[22] Initially, administrators from the monarchy came to work in the territory on a temporary basis before returning to their original postings.[23] When the high level of bureaucratic turnover proved disruptive for the fledging administration, in 1886 a pension fund legally regulated their positions in order to establish a larger degree of consistency.[24] Those bureaucrats who had been entitled to a pension for their service in the monarchy now also qualified for a pension through the Bosnian administration.[25] It is important to keep in mind that though some of the administrators coming from the monarchy may have had shared professional experiences as civil servants in the Austrian, Hungarian, and even the common imperial ministries, these experiences may not necessarily have produced a collective social identity. It was not even possible to speak of a single bureaucratic class per se within Austria, for example. As Waltraud Heindl points out, their education, salaries, and the institutions in which civil servants worked produced social hierarchies within the broader profession.[26] Similar boundaries likely developed within the Bosnian administration as well. Although Austro-Hungarian bureaucrats may have been responsible for much of the routine decision-making in Bosnia, we should not assume that their shared origin necessarily meant a common way of interpreting and managing issues on the ground.

Recently, scholars such as Amila Kasumović and Iva Lučić have begun to analyze the dynamics of the processes through which the administration's many institutions and regulations were created.[27] The story of the Bosnian Tobacco Monopoly, in particular, touches on some of the core issues raised by the Habsburg occupation. One of the first challenges the new administration faced was how to secure funding for its activities. Because the Austrian and Hungarian parliamentary delegations refused to approve the financing necessary to create and sustain a Bosnian bureaucracy, the Joint Finance minister had to find ways to make up the budgetary shortfall.[28] The tobacco monopoly was created in 1880 as one of the ways the administration sought to achieve this end.[29] By bringing the cultivation, production, and sale of tobacco under the control of the Provincial Government, the monopoly provided an important source of indirect tax revenue for the administration while at the same time further integrating the territory into the monarchy's institutions by extending the Common Austro-Hungarian Customs Union to include Bosnia.[30] How exactly the administration responded to existing local cultivation practices and the presence of private tobacco factories on the ground during this process is still an open question and one that remains

[22] If we look at all personnel employed by the Provincial Government in this year the distribution is quite different. Out of a total of 8,343 employees, 38.99 percent (3,253) were from Hungary, 34.45 percent (2,874) were from Austria, and 26.26 percent (2,191) were from Bosnia. According to Kraljačić, this is due to a greater number of people from Bosnia (but also Hungary) working at lower levels of the administration. See Kraljačić, *Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini (1882–1903)*, 438–39.

[23] Kraljačić, *Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini (1882–1903)*, 437.

[24] Kraljačić, *Kalajev režim u Bosni i Hercegovini (1882–1903)*, 437.

[25] See "Auszug aus dem Circularerlasse der Landesregierung für Bosnien und die Hercegovina vom 28. Dec. 1885" and "Circularerlass der Landesregierung für Bosnien und die Hercegovina vom 17. März 1886," in *Sammlung der Gesetze und Verordnungen für Bosnien und die Hercegovina. Jahrgang 1886. Zbornik zakona i naredaba za Bosnu i Hercegovinu. godina 1886* (Sarajevo: Landesdruckerei/Žemaljska tiskara, 1886), 635–40.

[26] Waltraud Heindl, *Josephinische Mandarine. Bürokratie und Beamte in Österreich*, vol. 2: *1848–1914* (Vienna: Böhlau Verlag Gmbh & Co., 2013), 28.

[27] See Kasumović, *Austrougarska trgovinska politika u Bosni i Hercegovini 1878–1914*, and Iva Lučić, "Contested 'Rights in Nature': Practices of Forest Use Regulation in Habsburg Bosnia–Herzegovina on the Crossroad between Private Capital, Local Population, and the Imperial State," paper presented at Exploiting Nature, Making an Empire: Natural Resource Extraction in the Late Habsburg Empire, University of Stockholm, Stockholm, Sweden, May 20–21, 2021. Lučić, in particular, takes up the question of continuities between the Ottoman and Habsburg regimes in terms of administrative practice and regulation.

[28] Peter F. Sugar, *Industrialization of Bosnia-Hercegovina, 1878–1918* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1963), 44–45.

[29] Sugar, *Industrialization of Bosnia-Hercegovina, 1878–1918*, 88–89.

[30] Sugar, *Industrialization of Bosnia-Hercegovina, 1878–1918*, 88–89.

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outside the scope of the current investigation.[31] What we can say is that the tobacco monopoly was important for the Provincial Government not only as a site of economic regulation and control, but also because of its role in financing the entire Habsburg project.

Habsburg civil servants directly oversaw the Bosnian Tobacco Monopoly, supervising its organization through a central directorate in the capital city of Sarajevo.[32] The administrators at the helm of the directorate managed the broader tobacco industry in the territory and therefore presided over the monopoly's increasing number of factories, purchasing stations, and staff. Their work was in turn supervised by the Provincial Government's finance department. While in 1885 the monopoly had consisted of two factories and the directorate, by 1914 it had grown to include an additional two factories and nine purchasing stations.[33] During the same period, the number of civil servants working for the monopoly increased from approximately thirteen to sixty-eight.[34] Given the available data, it remains unclear from which of the monarchy's territories these men hailed. Nevertheless, many of the administrators who came to work in the highest positions of the monopoly at its outset had likely already gained experience in the equivalent institutions in Austria or Hungary. It was not unheard of for administrators to move between the different monopolies even at the beginning of the twentieth century. For instance, a Miroslav Dyk, who worked at the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory first as a trainee in 1904 and then as an assistant in 1905, transitioned into the service of the Austrian Tobacco Monopoly in 1906.[35] By the end of the Habsburg period, however, the leading positions were filled by civil servants who had spent the majority of their careers climbing the administrative ladder specifically in Bosnia.

Government institutions like the tobacco monopoly not only provided an opportunity for civil servants to build a career, but also created many occasions for local people and Habsburg administrators to interact. One of the main sites of this interaction was the monopoly's factories. As the largest and most important production facility in Bosnia, the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory, in particular provides a prominent example through which to explore such encounters. Founded in 1880, the factory was overseen jointly by an inspector and a controlling officer who answered directly to the administrators at the monopoly directorate. They had at their disposal an office of approximately ten to twelve officials. Over time the number of civil servants working at the Sarajevo factory grew from nine in 1888[36] to between fourteen and sixteen administrators after 1909.[37] The inspector and the controlling officer were responsible for the administrative and financial aspects of the factory as well as for the production process. They also managed the factory's personnel—both civil servants and workers. Although it was normal for the lower officials and interns to change from one

[31] For example, Kasumović notes that the Ottoman administration regulated tobacco production in Bosnia as well as the presence of private tobacco factories in the territory prior to the occupation. See Kasumović, *Austrougarska trgovinska politika u Bosni i Hercegovini 1878–1914*, 78.

[32] Though regulated according to the laws of the common customs union, the Bosnian Tobacco Monopoly was institutionally separate from its Austrian and Hungarian counterparts.

[33] Due to the inaccessibility of the files of the Tobacco Monopoly Directorate at the time of research, these numbers are calculated based on the institutions of the tobacco monopoly listed in the almanac *Bošnjak* for the years 1885 and 1914. See *Bošnjak. Kalendar za prostu godinu 1885* (Sarajevo: Zemaljska štamparija, 1885), 74 and *Bošnjak. Zvanični kalendar za prostu godinu 1914* (Sarajevo: Zemaljska štamparija, 1913), 99–100.

[34] These numbers were likely slightly higher because, for example, the position of foreman (*Werkmeister*) is not included in the information provided on factory officials in *Bošnjak* despite being listed at times in another almanac, *Bosnischer Bote*.

[35] Provincial Government to the Joint Ministry of Finance, report, June 28, 1906, no. 8, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:39.

[36] *Bošnjak. Kalendar za prestupnu godinu 1888* (Sarajevo: Zemaljska štamparija, 1888), 114.

[37] *Bošnjak. Kalendar za prostu godinu 1910* (Sarajevo: Zemaljska štamparija, 1909), 36; *Bošnjak. Kalendar za prostu godinu 1911* (Sarajevo: Zemaljska štamparija, 1910), 36–37; *Bošnjak. Zvanični kalendar za prestupnu godinu 1912* (Sarajevo: Zemaljska štamparija, 1911), 88–89; *Bošnjak. Zvanični kalendar za prestupnu godinu 1913* (Sarajevo: Zemaljska štamparija, 1912), 98–99; *Bošnjak. Zvanični kalendar za prestupnu godinu 1914* (Sarajevo: Zemaljska štamparija, 1913), 99–100.

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year to the next, the inspector and the controlling official often occupied their posts for several years at a time. For example, Gustav Keller (?–?) managed the Sarajevo factory as inspector for nearly eighteen consecutive years, beginning in 1890/1891 until his departure in 1908.

The largest number of people employed at the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory, however, were not civil servants, but rather workers. These people were categorized as either permanent, provisional, or temporary employees and were further organized into departments depending on the type of work they performed.[38] Throughout the occupation the number of workers at the factory grew substantially. In 1881, the factory's several departments employed 156 permanent workers.[39] By 1906, the total number of workers had grown to roughly 700.[40] Approximately 67.80 percent (473 people) of the overall workforce at this time were women.[41] Women likewise comprised 70 percent of all tobacco workers across the entire industry in Bosnia by 1907.[42] Moreover, unlike the civil servants who managed the factory, the workers predominantly came from Sarajevo itself, not from Austria-Hungary.[43] With the introduction of machines to the factory floor at the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the number of workers began to decline.[44]

The tobacco monopoly and its management thus directly engaged a number of key issues that lay at the heart of Habsburg rule in Bosnia. It was a site where civil servants worked out questions of authority, economic control and integration, and the daily realities of the occupation on the ground. The monopoly also brought administrators face to face with the monarchy's new imperial subjects in several contexts.[45] Habsburg civil servants and local people alike often found themselves together in a single workplace, such as the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory. Workers' supervisors, themselves hired from the pool of permanent workers, acted as intermediaries between these two groups and likely mediated much of their routine interaction.[46] Yet, there were still other occasions when workers and civil servants came into direct contact with one another. Many of these incidents, like the strike of May 1906 and the investigation that followed, resulted from conflict in the factory and provide an opportunity for us to examine the ways in which these two groups interacted with each other. Such moments, as we will soon see, allow us to derive new insights into the relationship between the Habsburg administration and local society.

Engaging Habsburg Administrators from Below

From the very outset of the strike, some workers expressed ideas about how Habsburg administrators should govern. On the morning of April 30, 1906, a group of women working at the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory brought the activities of the firm's packaging department to a grinding halt. Likely compelled to action by the recent introduction of a new type of carton that reduced the number of pieces they could produce, and thus their daily

[38] On the categorization of workers and work in the factories of the Austrian Tobacco Monopoly, see Evelyn Kolm, "Die interne Sozialordnung der österreichischen Tabakregie von 1875 bis 1913" (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1981), 85–196.

[39] Provincial Government's Department of Finance to Joint Ministry of Finance, report, October 16, 1881, no. 40a, in *Građa o počecima radničkog pokreta u Bosni i Hercegovini od 1878–1905. Dokumenta iz austrougarskih arhiva*, ed. and trans. Vojislav Bogićević (Sarajevo: Državni arhiv Narodne republike Bosne i Hercegovine, 1956), 36.

[40] Fadil Fejzagić et al., *Fabrika duhana Sarajevo i njezini ljudi: 1880–1995* (Sarajevo: Fabrika Duhana Sarajevo, 1995), 92.

[41] Provincial Government to Joint Ministry of Finance, telegram, May 4, 1906, no. 23 in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 1:94.

[42] Hadžibegović, *Postanak radničke klase u Bosni i Hercegovini i njen razvoj do 1914. godine*, 372.

[43] Hadžibegović, *Postanak radničke klase u Bosni i Hercegovini i njen razvoj do 1914. godine*, 136.

[44] Hadžibegović, *Postanak radničke klase u Bosni i Hercegovini i njen razvoj do 1914. godine*, 138.

[45] On the issues and ambiguities of Bosnian nationality and citizenship during the Habsburg period, see Benno Gammerl, *Subjects, Citizens and Others: Administering Ethnic Heterogeneity in the British and Habsburg Empires, 1867–1918*, trans. Jennifer Walcoff Neuheiser (New York: Berghahn Books, 2018), 119–34.

[46] Kolm, "Die interne Sozialordnung der österreichischen Tabakregie von 1875 bis 1913," 90–92.

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earnings,[47] the women initiated what became a nearly two-week period of engagement with the Provincial Government. Though the interaction between the women workers and the administrators began as negotiations over wages, their discussions soon transformed into a debate about how the latter ought to manage social conflict. During this time they made clear their expectations of the civil servants. First, the women workers expressed how administrators should handle local people and their concerns. For instance, during the first five days of their strike (April 30–May 4), the women approached a number of different civil servants seeking clarity about an earlier petition regarding a wage increase. In this case, the workers communicated with the civil servants directly rather than through union leaders because the Joint Ministry of Finance had still not decided to approve a number of unions that had been proposed the year prior.[48] Initially, a deputation from the tobacco packaging department appeared at the factory's main office on April 30 in order to find out "if and in which way [their] petition . . . had been settled."[49] The head of the factory, Inspector Keller, informed them that their request had been passed on to the monopoly's higher ranking officials and they, "therefore[,] could await its settlement."[50] In response, the strikers immediately asked that Keller allow them "to dispatch a deputation of female workers [*Arbeiterinnen*] to the monopoly directorate in order to submit themselves anew their request regarding a wage increase."[51] The women understood that the monopoly officials possessed greater authority than the administrators with whom they had immediate contact and wanted to ensure that their case was brought to the former's attention.

When their attempts to persuade the civil servants at the directorate to clarify their stance on the petition likewise failed, the strikers began to target administrators working in a separate branch of the Provincial Government. On May 2, the packaging workers, now joined by the women of the cigarette department, "congregated by the city hall and wanted to call on the Government Commissioner [for the city of Sarajevo]."[52] Unlike the monopoly, the government commission acted as the office of first contact for issues specific to the city.[53] The women not only understood that the administration was composed of several different divisions, they also used this knowledge to try and circumvent decisions that had previously been made by other civil servants. Their strategy, however, was to no avail. Government Commissioner Myron Ritter von Nowina Zarzycki (1853–1934), like the administrators of the monopoly, instead continued to postpone a judgment and assured the strikers they would receive their raise soon. Until the monopoly director had a chance to

[47] In his report to the Provincial Government on the outcome of the strike, an unnamed administrator of the monopoly directorate described how the women wanted to work at the previous wage of 70 Heller per thousand pieces, rather than at the current rate of 1 Krone 34 Heller so long as they could switch back to producing the older packages. This was because the women could not produce the new package as quickly as the older version and instead saw an overall decrease in their daily earnings. Directorate of the Tobacco Monopoly to the Provincial Government, report, May 9, 1906, no. 152, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 1:238.

[48] A number of women tobacco workers had been involved in the labor movement before May 1906. For example, twenty of them attended the workers' assembly held on August 27, 1905, during which the representatives of twelve professions in Sarajevo established the Main Workers' Union (*Glavni radnički savez*) as well as six professional trade unions. On the development of unions in Bosnia, see Hadžibegović, *Postanak radničke klase u Bosni i Hercegovini i njen razvoj do 1914. godine*, 309–59, and Nedim Šarac, *Sindikalni pokret u Bosni i Hercegovini do 1919 godine: hronika* (Sarajevo: Narodna Prosvjeta, 1955).

[49] Directorate of the Tobacco Monopoly to the Provincial Government, no. 152, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 1:230.

[50] Directorate of the Tobacco Monopoly to the Provincial Government, no. 152, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 1:231.

[51] Directorate of the Tobacco Monopoly to the Provincial Government, no. 152, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 1:231.

[52] Directorate of the Tobacco Monopoly to the Provincial Government, no. 152, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine,* 1:235.

[53] The commissioner was not directly responsible for the factory, though his authority did overlap with his colleagues at the monopoly because the facility and its staff were in Sarajevo.

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consider their situation, however, he "strongly recommended they take up work."[54] This could take some time, because the director was away on business in Mostar. Moreover, even if the government commissioner had desired to settle the issue, he likely would have been unable to do so because he did not have the authority to make such decisions.

Several days later the Provincial Government finally responded to the women's call for action. On May 4, Civil Adlatus Benko received a deputation representing the workers of Sarajevo, which, alongside their demands regarding wages, shared the women workers' displeasure with what they saw as the factory administrators' unresponsive and even dismissive attitude toward them. Specifically, they alleged that Inspector Keller "yells at every female worker [*Arbeiterin*] if she asks for something or wants to complain, and snubs her [*weise sie schroff ab*] so that [she] cannot submit her petition or complaint."[55] The women apparently expected administrators to acknowledge them and their concerns. In response to the aforementioned allegations, Benko wrote to Monopoly Director Julius Reumann (1852–?) on May 5 and ordered him "to immediately conduct a rigorous investigation regarding the individual complaint points and to report the result [to him]."[56] Although these attempts to approach various administrators within the Provincial Government alone failed to persuade them to take immediate action, the women's repeated efforts to speak with different civil servants is telling. Despite being told time and again that a decision regarding their petition had to be postponed until the appropriate administrator was available to review it, the strikers continued to push the civil servants to consider the issue. Their behavior expressed a belief that the administrators should respond to the demands of local people, even if it meant changing how decisions were made.

The women workers likewise took a position on how administrators should respond to issues concerning certain government institutions. Five days after Benko's call for an investigation, the temporary head of the Provincial Government's finance department, Franz Ludwig (?–?), began to collect testimonies from the workers. On May 10 and 11, the lead investigator invited members of the workforce to submit a complaint to him in person at the factory. Altogether he compiled a dossier of twenty-nine statements, which he informed the Provincial Government he had had transcribed verbatim in the local language.[57] A large number of women workers who spoke to Ludwig argued that the factory's doctor, Karl/Karel Bayer (1850–1914), had prevented them from receiving medical care from the Workers' Association for Sickness and Support (*Arbeiter-Kranken und Unterstützungsverein/Radničko društvo za bolesnike i za potpomaganje*). Founded by the monopoly directorate in 1886, the association was jointly managed by the factory doctor and the factory's administrators.[58] As was the case in the Austrian Tobacco Monopoly, Bayer, who was responsible for maintaining up-to-date patient lists and individual patient files as well as the pharmacy, was most probably not considered a civil servant.[59] Membership in the workers' association was open to permanent male workers younger than the age of forty and female workers younger than

[54] The administrators of the finance department, monopoly, and government commission had actually met the day before and agreed to all respond the same way to the strikers. Directorate of the Tobacco Monopoly to the Provincial Government, no. 152, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 1:235.

[55] Internal communication of the Provincial Government, May 4, 1906, no. 31, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 1:100–101.

[56] Civil Adlatus Benko to Monopoly Director Reumann, draft communication, May 5, 1906, no. 32, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 1:101.

[57] Temporary Section Head Franz Ludwig to the Provincial Government, letter, June 8, 1906, no. 6, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:35.

[58] For the rules of the association, see Pravila radničkog društva za bolesnike i za potpomaganje duhanske fabrike u Sarajevu–Mostaru, December 19, 1886, no. 74, in Bogićević, *Građa o počecima radničkog pokreta u Bosni i Hercegovini od 1878–1905*, 59–64.

[59] In 1898, the directorate of the Austrian monopoly still considered these doctors to be "contracted functionaries" who were thus ineligible for a civil servant's pension. See Kolm, "Die interne Sozialordnung der österreichischen Tabakregie von 1875 bis 1913," 157. Moreover, the 1886 law on pensions for administrators in Bosnia specifically indicated that as head doctor of the Vakuf Hospital Bayer was not eligible for the pension scheme since the Gazi

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the age of thirty-five who paid a registration fee and made weekly contributions. Once enrolled, workers were entitled to free health care as well as a number of other social protections. In 1906, 548 workers participated in the scheme at the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory.[60]

In their testimonies, however, the women workers argued that in reality they often struggled to receive these benefits. Some of them alleged that this was because the doctor did not fulfill his obligation to provide care. For example, Mara Marković told the lead investigator that because Bayer "did not come to visit regularly while I was sick, therefore I had to call Dr. Dimitrijević."[61] According to the rules of the association, the factory doctor was not only to certify that a person was healthy enough to work but was also to provide free medical care to the association's members. When Marković tried to get Bayer to write her a prescription in order to avoid yet another doctor's fee he refused, "but instead promised me that the cost of the medicine will be refunded to me when I return to the factory."[62] Marković concluded that she still had not received the money Bayer had promised. Rather, she claimed that the doctor was inattentive toward his patients, uncooperative when he did actually speak to them, and neglected to properly handle the association's paperwork; all of this meant she was unable to access her medical benefits. Other women workers stressed that the doctor's misogynist behavior prevented them from receiving medical care. Numerous women chose to share instances where the doctor had sexually harassed them. Several women reported that the doctor had groped them during their appointments. Ljubica Ilić recalled how he had even done so, "while I was still a girl."[63] Both Terasija Matković and Mara Vuković described how Bayer had offered them money in exchange for sex, to which Matković responded: "I would rather have integrity and be poor [*da volim u poštenju biti sirota*]."[64] In many instances they explained that the doctor's actions had caused them to avoid seeking treatment from him all together. This was the case for Stana Mijović, who after being groped by Bayer, declared "I never went to him [again], nor will I go."[65]

As dues-paying members, however, the women workers also expected to receive the benefits to which the association's charter entitled them. Angja Adžić perhaps expressed this assumption best when she declared: "I think that I deserve to get a doctor for my money and I have worked [at the factory] for 12 years."[66] Moreover, by communicating this claim to the Provincial Government, the women also conveyed their belief that it was the task of the administrators to intervene to guarantee their rights in this specific institutional context. Overall, the women workers demonstrated that they understood their relationship to the Habsburg civil servants in terms of a process of negotiation. Specifically, the women workers demonstrated their particular expectation of how Habsburg rule should function. Sometimes they did so through their actions, by pushing the administrators to prioritize their petition and repeatedly contacting different branches of the Provincial Government. The strikers sought to persuade the civil servants to manage disputes involving local people like themselves in a way that responded to their concerns. The women workers also vocalized their point of view at other moments. Indeed, later when providing their testimonies to Ludwig, they reminded the civil servants that their role was to intervene to uphold people's specific institutional rights. For the women workers then, questions of rule were very much something on which they expressed themselves. Furthermore, by doing so, they actively sought themselves to define their relationship to the administrators. According to them,

Husrev–beg vakuf paid his pension. See "Circularerlass der Landesregierung für Bosnien und die Hercegovina vom 17. März 1886," in *Sammlung der Gesetze und Verordnungen für Bosnien und die Hercegovina. Jahrgang 1886*, 636–37.

[60] Hadžibegović, *Postanak radničke klase u Bosni i Hercegovini i njen razvoj do 1914. godine*, 263.

[61] Statement 4. Mara Marković, no. 5, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:31.

[62] Section 17 of the association's rules from 1886 did in fact allow members to seek treatment from another doctor so long as the administration and the factory doctor approved this ahead of time.

[63] Statement 29. Ljubica Ilić, no. 83, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 1:174.

[64] Statement 16. Terasija Matković, no. 83, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 1: 170.

[65] Statement 14. Stana Mijović, no. 5, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:33.

[66] Statement 21. Angja Adžić, no. 83, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 1:173.

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this relationship should be flexible enough to accommodate justifiable changes. Could the same be said of the administrators?

Debating the Role of Administrators from Within

For their part, the administrators actively discussed how to govern. First, they debated how to manage conflict between the administration and local people. For example, once his work at the factory had come to an end, Ludwig compiled his own report on the matter and sent it, along with the transcribed testimonies, to Civil Adlatus Benko on May 11 and 12.[67] More than a month later, on June 28, the Provincial Government sent its final account of the entire episode to the Joint Ministry of Finance. In it, the provincial administrators attempted to convince their superiors in Vienna that they had handled the issue with the workers' association properly; that they had been right to only issue Bayer a formal reprimand rather than to pursue a full disciplinary investigation against him. The administrators supported their action by referring specifically to the information produced by the investigation, including the issues the women workers had raised in their testimonies. The administrators argued that a formal warning was needed largely because the doctor "did not administer the sickness [association's] books and the medical consignment with the necessary accuracy."[68] Like the women workers, the administrators argued that Bayer had "neglect[ed] his medical professional duties."[69] However, they framed his shortcomings more in terms of the proper functioning of the workers' association and not the women's right to access it.

The provincial administrators also cited the doctor's behavior toward the women workers as a reason for the reprimand. As in the case of the women workers' complaints regarding their right to access the workers' association, the provincial administrators did not simply accept the women's arguments, but instead provided their own interpretation of the situation based on the testimonies. Specifically, the civil servants argued that the intervention was required because Bayer's "insufficient knowledge of the local [*einheimische*] language" caused him to "use expressions and phrases [while] in medical communication with the female workers, which offended their sense of shame [*Schamgefühl*]."[70] Here, the administrators understood the doctor's behavior as an issue of language, and not one of gender, as the women workers had understood it. It is possible that previous criticism of the regime's language policy by local political actors, who critiqued administrators' ability to communicate with people in the context of the civil courts, may have helped to shape this interpretation.[71] Ultimately, however, the administrators reinterpreted Bayer's behavior in order to make their own argument about his shortcomings. The civil servants asserted to the Joint Ministry of Finance that the improper conduct of Provincial Government employees toward local people constituted a valid reason to intervene to correct the situation. Indeed, the

[67] Although Ludwig's original report is not available, his letter to the Provincial Government on June 8 summarizes his findings. The Provincial Government later corroborates his account in its report to the Joint Ministry of Finance on June 28. See Ludwig to the Provincial Government, no. 6, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:34–37, and Provincial Government to the Joint Ministry of Finance, report, June 28, 1906, no. 8, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:38–42.

[68] Provincial Government to the Joint Ministry of Finance, no. 8, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:40.

[69] Provincial Government to the Joint Ministry of Finance, no. 8, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:40.

[70] Provincial Government to the Joint Ministry of Finance, no. 8, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:40.

[71] Though the internal language of the Provincial Government was predominantly German, administrators were required to have a knowledge of either the "provincial language" or another Slavic language in order to work in Bosnia. On the language politics of the Habsburg administration, see Dževad Juzbašić, "Jezička politika austrougarske uprave i nacionalni odnosi u Bosni i Hercegovini," in *Politika i privreda u Bosni i Hercegovini pod Austrougarskom upravom*, ed. Advo Sućeska (Sarajevo: Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, 2002), 383–421, and Dževad Juzbašić, *Jezičko pitanje u austrougarskoj politici u Bosni i Hercegovini pred prvi svjetski rat* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1973).

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administration informed Bayer that should he fail "in the future to comply in the full extent to [his] obligation as factory doctor . . . [had] would not be able to remain any longer in his position."[72] In framing their analysis in this way, the administrators clearly acknowledged that they had received the women's broader complaint. Yet, in doing so, they only indirectly recognized the validity of the women's position.

The civil servants also tried to support their decision to limit the Provincial Government's involvement by directly calling into question the legitimacy of the women's testimonies. In particular, they argued that the women's concerns about Bayer, though significant, should not be taken too seriously since their "complaints were in part unfounded . . . [as well as] in part severely exaggerated and overinflated."[73] The administrators sought to further undermine the women's credibility by asserting that "the exclusively Serbian Orthodox women leading the complaints [*serbisch orthodoxen Beschwerdeführerinnen*] [had] been incited by local elements affiliated with Serbian radical circles to complain to the leadership about Dr. Bayer . . . to oust [him] . . . and bring in a local doctor, Dr. Lazo Dimitrijević, in his place."[74] According to the report's authors, the women's alleged nationalist political motivations tempered the legitimacy of their claims. This, the administrators argued to the Joint Ministry of Finance, meant that the Provincial Government had less of an obligation to intervene. Interestingly, this is the only instance where nation is discussed throughout the entire episode. Neither the women workers nor the administrators frame the conflict at the factory in terms of nationality, which suggests that the category was largely irrelevant throughout their interaction.[75] The civil servants concluded their analysis by stating that they did not see "the initiation of a disciplinary investigation against Dr. Bayer [as either] necessary or justified."[76]

In the end, however, the provincial administrators were unable to persuade their superiors that they had properly managed the issue. On August 2, the Joint Ministry of Finance wrote to the Provincial Government. Apparently alarmed by the "grave material" the investigation had revealed about the doctor, the officials in Vienna ordered the provincial administrators to "remove [Bayer] from his role at the end of this year [and] that another doctor be entrusted with th[is] role . . . for the local tobacco factory."[77] Despite this outcome, the attempts by the administrators in Sarajevo to convince their superiors that they had dealt appropriately with the case of Bayer and the workers' association signals the existence of a wider discussion within the administration about how to properly manage conflict on the ground. All of the civil servants involved in the issue, like the women workers, accepted that the administration should intervene to rectify the situation. That the provincial administrators, however, also understood themselves as able to advocate for particular solutions suggests that the character of that intervention was not a foregone conclusion.

The administrators likewise struggled over how to handle their own interactions with the workers. After completing his interviews with the women workers, for example, the Provincial Government's lead investigator spoke with the factory administrators. During his audience, Franz Ludwig made several suggestions about how the civil servants should

[72] Provincial Government to Karl Bayer, letter, no. 7, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:38.

[73] Provincial Government to the Joint Ministry of Finance, no. 8, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:39.

[74] Provincial Government to the Joint Ministry of Finance, no. 8, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:39.

[75] On the dynamics of nationalism in Bosnia during the long nineteenth century, see Siniša Malešević, "Forging the Nation-centric World: Imperial Rule and the Homogenisation of Discontent in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878–1918)," *Journal of Historical Sociology* (2021): 1–23 (https://doi.org/10.1002/johs.12350), and Edin Hajdarpasic, *Whose Bosnia? Nationalism and Political Imagination in the Balkans, 1840–1914* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015).

[76] Provincial Government to the Joint Ministry of Finance, no. 8, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:39.

[77] Joint Ministry of Finance to the Provincial Government, communication, August 2, 1906, no. 9, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:43.

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engage with the workers in the future. In particular, he "requested, in the most benevolent manner . . . that they pay attention, so that neither on their part, nor that of the supervisors, a word falls which could offend the workforce."[78] Furthermore, the administrators should "benevolently receive the requests and complaints of the workforce and bring them to the attention of the director of the factory" so as to avoid situations where the workers might strike and thus attempt "to force the fulfillment of their possibly justified wishes on the street."[79] Ludwig expected the factory administrators to reconsider the manner in which they interacted with the workers and to adjust their behavior accordingly. Doing so, he believed, would allow the administration to prevent potential labor disruptions in the future. The factory's civil servants, however, strongly opposed Ludwig's assessment. On May 29, they wrote directly to the Joint Ministry of Finance, bypassing the Provincial Government altogether, in order to challenge the lead investigator's interpretation of their role in the conflict.[80] According to Ludwig's later report, the factory administrators believed that by cautioning them about their own behavior, the lead investigator had actually blamed them for the strike.[81] They interpreted his suggestions as an implied critique of the way they managed their relations with the factory's workforce.

Ludwig pushed back against the factory officials' accusation. Writing to the Joint Ministry of Finance on June 8, he confirmed that he had spoken to the factory administrators and argued that they had misinterpreted his intentions. Indeed, he claimed, "It did not occur to me at all to caution or to accuse the officials that they were to blame for the outbreak of the strike, since nothing unfavourable was brought up against them during the interrogations."[82] On the contrary, he was only suggesting that the factory administrators should "avoid everything which could provoke a generally agitated atmosphere, since they were dealing with a less intelligent stock [*einem minder intelligenten Material*]."[83] Ludwig simultaneously framed himself and the factory administrators as having the same aim—namely to prevent unrest—while also distancing himself from the workers, who he argued were not on the same level intellectually as the civil servants. He expressed this apparent solidarity in terms of specific social categories. The lead investigator then, however, went on to defend his initial interpretation of the factory administrators' behavior by referring to his seniority within the Bosnian administration. As both "the investigating commissioner as well as the interim leader of the finance department of the Provincial Government [he] was informed by [a] competent party, that the communication with the workforce occasionally tends to be harsh."[84] Because he was a high-ranking official, Ludwig asserted, the subordinate factory officials should have assumed that he had valid grounds for his actions. Thus, although he may have reframed the incident to emphasize his solidarity with the factory's administrators as a civil servant himself, the lead investigator also maintained that the nature of their interactions with the workers was not beyond criticism.

Ultimately, the Joint Ministry of Finance accepted Ludwig's explanation. In the same response it sent to the Provincial Government about Bayer on August 2, the ministry in Vienna instructed the provincial administrators to inform the factory's civil servants that a "disparaging judgement about the officials' activities up to that point was far from [the lead inspector's] mind [*ferne gelegen ist*]."[85] The Provincial Government was also to notify Ludwig that his comment regarding the workers' apparent need to take to the streets in

[78] Ludwig to the Provincial Government, no. 6, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:36.
[79] Ludwig to the Provincial Government, no. 6, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:36.
[80] Although the factory officials' initial letter is unavailable, both Ludwig and the Joint Ministry of Finance reference the complaint in their reports from June 8 and August 2, respectively.
[81] Ludwig to the Provincial Government, no. 6, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:36.
[82] Ludwig to the Provincial Government, no. 6, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:36.
[83] Ludwig to the Provincial Government, no. 6, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:36.
[84] Ludwig to the Provincial Government, no. 6, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:36.
[85] Joint Ministry of Finance to the Provincial Government, no. 9, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:43.

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order to "force the fulfillment of [their] justified wishes" had been "tactless."[86] Accepting the lead inspector's clarification did not mean that the Joint Ministry of Finance approved fully of his behavior. Though the civil servants in Vienna saw no need to pursue the matter between Ludwig and the tobacco factory officials any further, the incident demonstrates that there was opportunity for civil servants to express and advocate for their different visions of the manner in which they should interact with local workers. Indeed, the question of how the administrators should speak to and treat these people led to noticeable tensions between different groups of administrators that in turn required the Joint Ministry of Finance to step in and mediate.

Altogether, the civil servants' response to the workers' association at the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory reveals that the Habsburg administrators' relationship to the women workers involved a process of debate. The civil servants presumed that the affair fell within their competencies and that they should therefore intervene. This shared assumption, however, did not correspond to a single united perspective when it came to putting governance into practice. Civil servants instead argued among themselves about the best way to manage conflicts between agents of the Provincial Government, like Bayer, and local people, as well as how officials should behave toward the monarchy's subjects. In their correspondence with the Joint Ministry of Finance, provincial administrators championed their own specific solutions to the dispute, while the factory officials and Ludwig each promoted a different approach to engaging with the workers. For them, these central questions of rule remained unsettled and open for deliberation. More importantly, by making their arguments, the civil servants helped to generate and contribute to an ongoing discussion across different levels of the administration about the nature of their role in Bosnia. There seems to have been a tacit understanding that the relationship between administrators and workers was actively being worked out in that moment.

Conclusion: Rethinking the Nature of Late Habsburg Rule in Bosnia

In the end, the women workers returned to the factory having achieved a majority of their demands, including a wage increase.[87] Yet, despite their successes, conflicts between administrators and workers continued at the factory. A local informant warned the Provincial Government of potential unrest at the site already in January of the following year.[88] More important, however, is the crucial window the case of the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory strike provides into the nature of late Habsburg rule in Bosnia. Discussions about wages and factory conditions quickly became debates about how administrators should relate to local people and manage disputes. Unlike our current approaches, which emphasize the dominant role of the regime in defining the relationship between Habsburg civil servants and subjects in Bosnia, the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory strike suggests that this process was more interactive than we have previously thought. From the moment they walked off the job on April 30, the women workers began a process of negotiation with the civil servants about the nature of their relationship to governing authority. The strikers asserted a vision of governance that should be both responsive and fair. They interpreted their relationship to the administration as flexible enough to accommodate some degree of change. Civil servants at different levels of the administrative hierarchy between Sarajevo and Vienna also took up the question of how the administrators should relate to the women workers. The provincial

[86] Joint Ministry of Finance to the Provincial Government, no. 9, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 2:43.

[87] The Provincial Government also approved wage raises for workers employed at the tobacco factories in Mostar, Banja Luka, and Travnik at the request of the monopoly directorate and in an attempt to prevent spillover strikes in these facilities. Directorate of the Tobacco Monopoly to the Provincial Government, no. 152, in Isović, *Generalni štrajk u Bosni i Hercegovini 1906. godine*, 1:237.

[88] Informant to the Provincial Government, report, January 14, 1907, no. 9, in *Radnički pokret u Bosni i Hercegovini 1907. godine*, ed. and trans. Kasim Isović (Sarajevo: Arhiv Bosne i Hercegovine, 1975), 65.

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and factory administrators proposed various solutions to and interpretations of the strike. According to them, the relationship between administrators and the empire's subjects could be influenced and reshaped. Despite espousing different positions on how the civil servants ought to intervene, both the women workers and the administrators shared a belief that governance could resolve the conflict. They expressed a profound interest in questions of Habsburg rule as they played out on the ground.

There were, however, clear and implicit limits to their discussions of governance. At no point did either the women workers or the administrators question the ultimate authority exercised by the latter in the dispute, even if the strikers attempted to use this particular circumstance to their advantage by shopping around for a favorable decision regarding their petition. Although we cannot know why the Joint Minister of Finance ultimately decided to remove Bayer from his position, the ministry's engagement over the issue itself is telling and allows us to consider the work of the administration in a different light. Here the relationship between subjects of the Habsburg monarchy and its administrators was defined by processes of debate and discussion that were in many ways grounded in concerns about fairness.

The case of the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory strike complicates our current understanding of the nature of late Habsburg rule in Bosnia in two key ways. First, the discussions between the women workers and the civil servants, as well as among the civil servants themselves, suggests that Habsburg governance allowed for more "bottom-up" negotiation than is typically acknowledged. Both the administrators and workers sought to shape their relationship in a way that accommodated a range of possible outcomes. This dynamic comes to light only when we analyze how different government and societal actors interacted on the ground and on their own terms. Second, the language the civil servants and the women workers used to make their arguments demonstrates that both groups justified Habsburg administrative decision-making using many different ideas. Throughout both the striking workers and administrators used a language of shared concepts of rights, of language use, of nation, and of professional hierarchies to support their vision of fairness. The women workers argued that the civil servants should intervene to guarantee their access to the workers' association because they had a right as members to do so. The civil servants explained that Bayer's insufficient use of the local language and the women's alleged ties to Serbian nationalists meant that their choice to issue a reprimand, rather than fire the doctor outright, had been the correct course of action. Lastly, Ludwig justified his decision to lecture the factory administrators by arguing that his senior rank gave him greater insight into their treatment of the workers. Whether the civil servants understood their actions to somehow maintain Austro-Hungarian cultural dominance or to impose full administrative control seemed of little interest in this moment, contrary to what our current understandings of the Habsburg administration would have us believe. This is not to say that concerns about control or supposed civilizational difference were irrelevant to administrators and the language they used. An overwhelming body of literature shows quite clearly that these concepts played a critical role in Austro-Hungarian decision-making. However, the case of the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory asks us to acknowledge that in daily-life practice, governance was conceived of and explained in a broader variety of ways. It also forces us to consider more carefully that even basic civilizational justifications for Habsburg rule may also have been context specific.

This suggests that the state in Bosnia operated differently than we have previously thought; an observation which in turn prompts a number of new questions about the relationship between the Habsburg administration and the people it ruled. Did civil servants' understandings of their relationship to the empire's subjects in Bosnia change depending on the situation or institutional setting and vice versa? Were there some instances where a particular way of justifying rule was more compelling than others? How might this have developed over time? Pursuing these questions may well lead to a more differentiated interpretation of Habsburg administrative practice and by extension rule. Further research would

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be needed to be able to make such a case concretely and persuasively. What we can say, given the example of the Sarajevo Tobacco Factory strike, is that we require an approach that accounts for more open-ended practices of governance. Acknowledging this not only asks us to begin to rethink our understanding of the state in Bosnia, but ultimately opens the door to reconsidering the very nature of Habsburg rule itself.

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