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**TRANSFORMATION OF AGRARIAN STRUCTURE IN CADASTRIAN
PARISH ZGORNJE JABLANE IN ZGORNJE DRAVSKO POLJE**

The actual forms and intensiveness degrees of land utilization in the Zgornje Dravsko polje are the result of factors as relief, pedology, and hydrography on one hand, and of the centuries old development of farming, of the influence of urban districts, viz, of Maribor at the northern limit and of Ptuj at the southern border of the region, as well as of the ever increasing decline of agriculture and of the spreading urbanization during the last 30 years, on the other hand. The regionalization of agriculture in the past in view of the natural possibilities of land utilization has later been considerably modified by socio-economic factors, and they had a special influence on the intensiveness of land utilization. In the limelight is the development of Maribor, and industrial centre about 100.000 inhabitants and with 25.520 jobs in industry in 1961, 2870 of them having been filled by people from the Zgornje Dravsko polje.

The vast plain along the Drava river belongs to the most suitable regions in Slovenia for agriculture, which appears from the share of arable land which covered 57,7 % in 1825 when it was at its highest. Only the more intensive land utilization with increased yields per hectare brought about the reduction to 49,5 % in 1900. Ever since, the influence of Maribor and of Ptuj is already to be felt, but a decline in agriculture has been produced only after 1950 by re-education of the active agrarian population for other professions, and by employing farmers' children in nonagrarian vocations. The first consequence of the lack of manpower in agriculture was the change in land use, especially turning of fields into meadows. Till 1954, the share of fields was reduced to 45,6 % and till 1963 even to 42,8 %. The distance from Maribor and from thoroughfares was the basis of the regional differentiation of the decrease of tilled land surfaces. In the northern part of the valley there were 42,3 % of fields in 1954: until 1963, this share has been reduced to 34,7 %. In the southern part of the valley, there were 48,8 % of fields in 1954, 47 % in 1963, and 44,7 % in 1967. The reduction of tilled land coincides with changes of other land use, especially of grassland and of forests which cover considerable surfaces in the Zg. Dravsko polje. In 1825, there was 23,1 % grassland, in 1900 29,2 %, and till 1963 their less intensively utilized surface increased to 29,8 %. In the meantime, the share of forest increased from 15,6 % in 1900 to 18,7 % in 1963.

In the past, agricultural production depended, in the first place, on the structure of land property, on the size of single land uses, and on the area of tilled land. The decline of agriculture on one hand and the specialization in agricultural products on the other hand considerably loosened this dependence and partly even abolished it, since it shifted the stress of farming on fields — in many cases only on certain plots of tilled land. Hence the actual structure of ownership does not represent the real value of agriculture — especially not in the Zg. Dravsko polje. If one nevertheless wishes to catch a glimpse of the ownership structure, there is in 1963 a considerable share of small-holders with a property up to 2 hectares (59,2 %) which is till larger in the northern part of the valley where the corresponding share is 70,1 %. On the other hand, the share of farmers with more than 5 hectares is decreasing; it is 22 %, and in the southern part 33,3 %, but their landed property is till 67,6 % of the entire farm land in the Zg. Dravsko polje. The intensiveness of the decline of agriculture heavily affected the entire valley, and it moves from south to north, and somewhere it even passes over into urbanization. The resistance of those settlements with favourable ownership structure where the land of each farmer is in one plot — in this case by repartition of land into tracts (»Streifenflur«), was the most successful one. Zgornje Jablane belongs to these settlement too. This settlement is situated at the border of the sphere of dry gravel and of clay as well as of loam which called for grassland-and-field husbandry. In 1963, there were 42,3 % fields and 50,2 % grassland, i.e. 24,8 % m7adows and 25,4 % pastures, which means that the change in the land use is next to nothing. It is true, there was emigration among the population (from 1953 to 1961), the population decreased from 167 to 163, but in most cass one child remained on the farm which contributed to the preservation of the favourable ownership structure. In 1963, 11 out of 37 farmers had farms up to 2 hectares, 9 from 2 to 5 hectares, and 17 more than 5 hectares, 8 of which owned even more than 10 hectares. In spite of the increase of the number of owners, the average size of their land increased from 2,36 to 5,5 hectares, in the first place because of the repartition of common pastures.

Hence the decline of agriculture in Zgornje Jablane makes itself felt in the reduction of agricultural labour, which is especially heavy, and there are no daily migrants to take part in the tilling of land; in 1961, only 6 people of this place were employed in industry. In husbandry, the consequences are manifest in a more extensive tilling and in the reduction of the number of cattle and hogs. In 1964, out of 33 households who own more than 0,5 hectares of land, 19 had entirely farm character, 9 were mixed, and only 5 were of nonfarm character. 44 active farm inhabitants worked on all farms (in 1953, there were still 82 of them). So 2,5 hectares of arable land came on one active farm inhabitant. Their age was rather favourable: 35,8 % were between 18 and 39 years old, 39,6 % between 40 and 59, while 24,6 % were older. 58,2 % of the population of Zgornje Jablane were farmers and farm-hands, which is above the average of the southernpart of the Zg. Dravsko polje where this share 43,5 %, and 55 % without Kidričevo and Pragersko which are entirely nonagrarian settlements.

The Zg. Dravsko polje is renowned for its potatoes which became a real specialization in the southern settlements. Potatoes do not require

much work except during the crop, are that factor which also in Zgornje Jablane hinders turning fields in meadows, especially in view of the ever increasing mechanization.

All settlements in the southern part of the Drava valley have a development of the agricultural structure similar to that of Zgornje Jablane. The lack of farm-hands and the rise in the share of old people to the total population preserve also the old polycultural agrarian orientation with the stress on potatoes. This is the structure which is unable to bring about a reorientation of farm production and an adaptation to the market.