

## **GOTENICA International version**

OPENING CREDITS + TITLE

### **GOTENICA , BETWEEN LOVE AND FEAR**

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Opening scene of the film  
 PICTURE /total: Woods, roads, Gotenica.....

1./ **TC 10.00.10** /begins in OFF, then in picture /

**HENRIK DRALKA**  
**former reserve officer of Yugoslav Army**

In the communist school  
 they told us that Yugoslavia

had many enemies who were trying  
 to infiltrate the country,

and that we had to be very  
 attentive, because our enemies

were planning to topple  
 the socialist regime for good.

That's all they told us.

Nobody said anything  
 about prison camps

or about that area in Gotenica  
 being completely sealed.

Such things were kept secret.

**TC 10.00.49**

**1 -VOICE OVER:**

**Deep in the remote woods of south-east Slovenia, there is a place that was in the past used as a secret location. The first settlers, the German peasants from the 14<sup>th</sup> century would have never believed it –as wouldn't their ancestors, who were at the end of the WW2 transported away together with other Slovene inhabitants. The place was emptied for the new people to come and new secrets to turn into a taboo subject for four decades. It stayed like this until the early nineties when new democratic Slovenian government allowed people to enter the place for the first time.**

**2./ TC 10.01.27****TONE ŠEGA****former resident of Gotenica**

The idea to delve into the past  
of Gotenica and its villagers

occurred to me in June 1991,  
when Slovenia became independent

and we were allowed to visit  
the village for the first time.

Everybody came,  
none of the 80 survivors

now scattered in all parts  
of Slovenia was missing.

It was so emotional.

My eyes still fill with tears  
when I think of that day.

/MUSIC-»Gotenica, beloved village, my old home«/  
PICURE in accordance with the text

**T.C 10.02.11****TONE ŠEGA**

So the next time we reunited,  
we decided to erect a monument

to the villagers that died  
in that period –

from the exodus of Slovenian  
Germans in December 1941

to December 1949,  
when Gotenica was closed.

Namely, the cemetery was gone  
but the remains of our loved ones

were there. The remains

of those who died

during or shortly after the war.

#### **TC 10.02.47**

##### **VOICE OVER:**

**2- The sparsely populated area of Gotenica was a home to German colonists in 14<sup>th</sup> century. For centuries they lived together with native Slovenes to fight against the Turks. At the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century the majority of population was German. During German occupation in WW2 the great part of German population moved away with German troops. The rest was swept by force of Tito's partisans who held here their place of retreat there during the war. After the war the place was sealed away and prison camps for POW's and political prisoners were raised. But this was only the beginning.**

#### **3./ T.C 10.03.31**

**dr. MITJA FERENC, historian and advisor to the parliamentary commission for investigation on Gotenica -1991**

After the war, German prisoners worked here for a while:

Victorious communists planned for Gotenica to become

a model of large-scale socialist economy.

Since 1947, only workers on a state agricultural estate

or members of local agricultural cooperatives could apply

for a permanent residence in Gotenica.

#### **6./ T.C 10.04.00**

**TONE ŠEGA**

**former resident of Gotenica**

After World War II the people of Gotenica

were anxious to learn what plans the new regime had

for the village.

They wanted to form  
an agricultural cooperative,

but the new communist regime  
said no because a cooperative

was formed in some other  
bigger village nearby.

The area of Gotenica  
became a state estate

under a special regime.  
My mother worked there

as a field worker. Vacant houses  
in Gotenica were inhabited

by displaced families  
from other parts of Slovenia

and they all worked  
on the estate.

#### **9./ T.C 10.04.51**

**/ archive footage from a film report propagating cattle-breeding in the Kočevska region/**

*The long-time neglected Kočevska  
is becoming*

*the biggest cattle-breeding centre  
in the country.*

*In the next few five-year plans  
it will no doubt become*

*a socialist model  
of successful economic reforms.*

#### **TC 10.05.02 TONE ŠEGA**

The system was very simple.  
Every morning all adults

gathered in the central square,  
the foreman divided them

into groups of ten,  
gave them the tools

and sent them to work  
in the fields.

Daily norms were set and  
workers received small wages.

#### **TC 10.05.26**

##### **3- VOICE OVER:**

**Gotenica was meant to become a role model of communist economy and a proud of a Federal Republic of Slovenia, one of six republics of communist Yugoslavia that emerged out of the ruins of WW2 under the leadership of Marshal Tito. The propaganda machinery used Gotenica as an example of a “ righteous new world” to be built under a communist regime.**

#### **7./ TC 10.05.53**

/ film report propagating cattle-breeding in the Kočevska region/

*Every worker is assigned  
a specific task*

*and they all compete  
in achieving the same goal:*

*More milk and more meat  
for working people.*

#### **TC 10.06.04**

##### **4- VOICE OVER:**

**In 1949 the monolithic block of communist alliance cracked due to a serious dispute between two communist leaders: Tito and Stalin. This period, known as “Inforburo” threatened with military clash between Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.**

#### **4. TC 10.06.24**

**dr. MITJA FERENC, historian and advisor to the parliamentary commission for investigation on Gotenica -1991**

In 1949, a secret plan  
was adopted

for Gotenica  
to become a hide-out

for the highest political and  
military leaders of the republic.

In 1950, the first workers  
arrive to Gotenica

and the area becomes highly restricted.

In 1948, the village still had 148 residents,

but since 1950 it has had no permanent residents at all.

25./ TC 10.06.58  
**mag. LJUBA DORNIK ŠUBELJ**  
**Slovenian National Archives**

During the Informbiro period after the 1948 dispute between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia had reasons to believe that Eastern forces might be preparing an attack. Its former (communist) allies had openly threatened Yugoslavia, therefore Yugoslav communist leadership of that time decided that safety measures had to be taken and hidden shelters secured in all parts of the country. And Gotenica was one of those shelters. And since Ivan Maček had performed important secret military tasks already during the war, he was entrusted with such activities also after the war. He coordinated and participated in the Gotenica project from the very beginning and supervised everything.

TC 10.07.36

**5- VOICE OVER:**

**And so Gotenica was to become an ultimate shelter for highest ranking communist leaders of the time. The person behind the plan was one of the Marshal's Tito closest collaborators from the war, the chief of Secret Police Ivan Macek. In the atmosphere of fear and secrecy, the foundations for the bunkers were laid by political prisoners and displaced persons who after the end of the war were moved to the area by authorities. The hope for a decent life vanished under a pressure of one-party dictatorship and a series of show trials that helped the communist regime to repress the opponents.**

11./ TC 10.08.22

**PAVLA MIKULIČ**

**former resident of the restricted zone Gotenica**

Many times you had to submit, you know, against your own will.

We went through a great deal, I don't want to talk about it.

Many moments to suffer, extremely hard moments.

(I'll say no more/ So...).

#### **TC 10.08.46**

##### **6- VOICE OVER:**

**Gotenica remained a secret for another 40 years but rumours were spread among people about the armoured and luxurious bunkers for the elite. The democratic changes toward the end of the 80' made the access possible for historians, journalist and even some former residents. The first reportage for television was made only after Slovenia gained independence in 1991. The remote and secret area this time served as a military base to Slovenian troops for actions against Yugoslav Army.**

#### **13./ TC 10.09.25**

**/excerpt from the Dossier show, reporter Rosvita Pesek, TVS, 1992/**

In Slovenia, World War II ended  
with the expulsion

of occupational forces in 1945,

but for residents  
of this remote region

freedom started rising above  
the clouds only after 1990.

It took 45 years before many  
long-pending questions

started getting their answers,  
including the reason

why this area remained  
isolated for so long,

and why anyone  
outside that circle

could never learn  
anything about it.

#### **15. TC 10.10.02**

**VINKO FUGINA, former Gotenica executive (?)**

Back then,  
I was receiving journalists

from whole Yugoslavia,  
who came to see

the restricted zone.

They wanted me to show them  
secret exits and hidden airports.

I kept telling them  
that there were no airports

because you can't land a plane  
on a slope just like that.

**16./ TC 10.10.**

**dr.MITJA FERENC, historian and advisor to the parliamentary commission  
for investigation of Gotenica - 1991**

There's some bitter aftertaste  
that although we were given

a tour round the premises  
in the restricted zone,

we did not learn much  
about what took place there

in the past decades.  
The archives were gone,

there were no documents  
about how the place was run,

nothing about labour camps  
or construction works...

**17./ TC 10.10.44**

**VINKO FUGINA, former Gotenica executive**

You know,  
we did show them everything,

but you have to understand  
that every state, ours included,

has its secrets. Like the police  
and the army have their secrets.

Why not?

-5-

**18/ TC 10.11.01**  
**/OFF/ ROSVITA PESEK, journalist**  
**TV Dossier, 1992**

The restricted zone this area  
 was like a state in the state.

But why, actually?

Because of a narrow circle  
 of communist lords

and their lust for power?

Or because of the extravagance  
 of a single individual?

**TC 10.11.22**

**7- VOICE OVER:**

**The chief of Secret Police and former partisan Ivan Macek was not only a chief commander of the restricted zone but also the creator of this “state within the state”. The bunkers had contained apartments, kitchen, surgery and even screening room. But prior to building the area had to be secured. The first target of Macek’s superior plan were the post-war settlers.**

**TC 10.11.52**

**19 (a quote from the letter of Ivan Macek )**

As the Minister of Constructions  
 in the PR of Slovenia

and former partisan I knew  
 the area of Gotenica very well.

Since by 1950 the original  
 inhabitants had left the area,

it was relatively easy to move  
 the immigrants to other places.

**20./ TC 10.12.14**

**TONE ŠEGA**

**former resident of Gotenica**

In December 1949,

without any notice,

lorries arrived to Gotenica.

In a matter of minutes

a lorry was parked  
in front of every house

inhabited by immigrants.

They were given a short time  
to pack their belongings

then they drove them away.

Only my mother and  
her 90-year old father in law

and another villager,  
Marija Bartol,

were allowed to stay in Gotenica.

**21./ TC 10.12.50**  
**PAVLA MIKULIČ**  
**resident of the restricted area**

There was a prison camp  
in Gotenica, near our fields.

I often saw prisoners  
being transported from Gotenica

to the nearby quarry,  
where they dug sand;

probably for the works  
in Gotenica.

They wore striped uniforms  
and caps, and they were young.

It was forbidden to talk to them,  
police officers in uniforms

watched them all the time.

**22./ TC 10.13.33**  
**TONE ŠEGA**  
**former resident of Gotenica**

In May 1950, new people  
came to Gotenica.

They came to work there.

First they built guardhouses  
far out in the woods,

so that no one could  
enter the area unnoticed.

Then the construction works  
in the restricted zone began.

-6-

**23./ TC 10.14.00**

**SLAVKO ABRAM**

**former builder of the bunker in Gotenica**

When we came to Gotenica,  
it was rather untidy,

full of undergrowth and weeds.  
Water cascaded from up there,

here was a ditch. Now there's  
a drainage channel here under.

This is the hill; ventilating fans  
are over there, on the top.

We dug deep into the hill,  
and used the explosive, too.

Then we drove the material  
away, washed it and ground it.

Day and night.

We used that gravel and sand  
to make cement,

and that cement was used  
for building underground tunnels.

Nothing went to waste.

Our superiors warned us  
to keep everything

that we saw or did there  
to ourselves.

That we should never tell  
anybody anything

or we would get into trouble.  
When I went home for a visit

I had to lie to my family  
and to others about my job.

**26./ TC 10.14.47**

**SLAVKO and DANICA ABRAM**

**former builder of the bunker in Gotenica and his wife**

- After four months of working in Gotenica I came home on a visit for the first time.
- He didn't come home very often.
- My wife lived on a farm some 100 km away. When I came home, I was watched by secret police constantly, they followed me everywhere. They followed my wife, too.
- I knew nothing; he never told me anything (about Gotenica). It was better that way, for my own sake. Someone came from Ljubljana and asked for my husband, wanted to know where he worked.
- He was a member of the secret police.
- I told him I knew nothing about my husband's work, each time he asked me.
- 'How come that you two never speak about his work?' he kept pressing me.
- No, I said, he never talks about his work.
- See, how he was testing her?
- And that man came many times...

**31./ TC 10.15.33**

**VINKO FUGINA**

**former Gotenica executive**

»For us who worked in Gotenica, IVAN MAČEK MATIJA was a good boss. Of course he got angry sometimes, and he preferred to be surrounded by hard-working people, that's normal. He was very fond of children. You wouldn't believe it, but he knew every child in the village, all families that lived there, and all their problems. He took interest in us. He used to come here on Wednesdays and usually stayed overnight, then returned to Ljubljana on Thursdays. He used the extension behind that house. Rumour had it that he had a luxurious villa here, but it was far from that. That extension had a living room, a bedroom and a bathroom, and it was very modestly furnished.«

**27./ TC 10.16.13**

**VINKO FUGINA**

**former Gotenica executive**

How did they choose (trustworthy) workers for Gotenica? I don't know, they must have checked our background first, I suppose. Some say that they were asked to sign a vow of secrecy. I personally was never asked to sign anything. They told me that we were bound to secrecy and for me that was it.

**TC 10.16.37**

**8- VOICE OVER:**

**There's been a number of churches in the area, some from as early as 18<sup>th</sup> century, raised by German inhabitants. People feared expressing their religious beliefs since religion was banned by the communist authorities. Some churches were destroyed during the war and the rest didn't stay much longer.**

**28./ TC 10.17.04**

**TONE ŠEGA**

**former resident of Gotenica**

During the construction works in Gotenica, they also pulled the church down. I still have a photo of the church without a tower.

**29./ TC 10.17.24**

**HENRIK DRALKA**

**former reserve officer of Yugoslav army**

Many people told me, and I've read it in some books, too, that we, Macek's workers in the restricted zone, pulled down all the churches in the area. But that's not true. We pulled down some churches, yes: the one in Gotenica, and another four in nearby places. We did that. But there was also a church in some other village and that one was pulled down, but not by us. The *chetniks*, the troops of Serbian royal army had done it before we came.

**30./ TC 10.18.00**

**DANICA and SLAVKO ABRAM**

**the builder of the bunker in Gotenica and his wife**

- »Back where I lived, people were very religious. A relative tried to talk me into having Sonja, our daughter christened. I told her that I did not dare to go to church. I'd rather not have her baptised than get into trouble. So my relative took her to the church on her own. When she brought her back, she said 'It's OK, nobody saw us.'

-But they did! A couple of days later I was interrogated by my boss. He said, 'What kind of a communist are you if you had your daughter christened?'

Damn it, I had no idea that she would take Sonja to be christened. What should I have done afterwards? Kill her?

.....

Then came a local boss of the secret police, devil take him. They simply ordered her to take the baby and get into the car, and they moved her to the restricted zone, as a punishment, into some shabby old house. I had no idea they were coming, I could not prepare anything for their arrival, not even clean up the place.

-God, was it dirty. I thought he knew we were coming.

### **32./ TC 10.19.25**

#### **SLAVKO and DANICA ABRAM the builder of the bunker and his wife**

- »When they took me to Gotenica, they said that it would be better for the family to stay together.
- We were making cement, and my boss came to me and said, 'Go home, your family has arrived.' What family, I said. Where am I supposed to accommodate them? So we were placed in some shabby old house, and we lived there for years, until we moved into this house. Had they told me where I was expected to work, I would have never signed the papers. I was thinking about changing job, but they did not let me. They were afraid that I would tell what went on here.

### **TC 10.20.06**

#### **9- VOICE OVER:**

**The famous bunkers that caused so many human pain and suffering, destroyed and changed so many lives during building, were actually never used by the communist leaders. There came often for a hunt or other pleasures but there was no need for a shelter like this. The area remained sealed, as a strange grey spot on a map of Slovenia, the people not only got used to it, but they grew old and forgotten. The first access to Gotenica was possible only from the end of eighties on.**

### **14./ TC 10.20.43**

#### **dr. MITJA FERENC, historian and advisor to a parliamentary commission for investigation on Gotenica -1991**

In 1991 I had a chance  
to join a group of delegates

assigned to a special  
parliamentary commission

on a visit to Gotenica.  
to investigate the situation

where the superintendents  
of the police centre

were to show us  
around once restricted zone.

We spent the whole day driving  
around the restricted zone

and saw the premises that have  
never been shown before.

**40./ TC 10.21.15**

**TONE ŠEGA**

**former resident of Gotenica**

»When we first came to Gotenica after all those years, we asked where it was OK for us to look around. And they said that we could enter any house that was not locked. And most houses were open. First, everyone went to the house in which he used to live, naturally. It was ... beyond words. «

**39./ TC 10.21.45**

**LOJZ TRŠAN**

**Slovenian Film Archives**

» There's absolutely no footage from the restricted zone. We have some footage from a nearby town of Kočevje, which was promoted as a successful agricultural region, but nothing about the restricted zone. «

**TC 10.22.40**

**10- VOICE OVER:**

**Slovenia declared independency in June 1991 after only ten days of military clashes with withdrawing Yugoslav Army. Gotenica was again used as a secret place : this time as a training ground for Slovenian territorial defence troops that played crucial role in obtaining territorial intangibility of new Slovenian state. In the shadow of a real war there was another battle going on and Gotenica got another role in this one.**

**41./ TC 10.22.40**

**LOJZ TRŠAN**

**Slovenian Film Archives**

In Slovenia, we had no suitable storage place for highly flammable films on celluloid, therefore, films were stored in Belgrade, in the Yugoslav Cinematheque Depot, which was the only adequate storage place in the country in terms of fire-safety. When Slovenia decided to break away from Yugoslavia, we had to figure out a way to retrieve those films that were kept in Belgrade, and store them in some proper place in Slovenia. So the operation Belgrade-Ljubljana, as we called it, began. The films were successfully transported directly to Gotenica, and just a few days later the

war for Slovenia broke out. The transport of our archive films was one of the last transports to have taken place between Belgrade and Ljubljana.

**42./ TC 10.24.09**

**IVAN NEDOH**

**Slovenian Cinematheque**

»In the beginning of 1996, the Slovenian Cinematheque and National Film Archives got permission from the Ministry of Interior to let us use some of the underground premises for storage. The storage space totals some 400 m<sup>2</sup>. When I first came here, the rooms seemed huge to me. I used to walk around with a map in my hand, otherwise I'd lose my way in that network of underground corridors. Everything seemed so complicated, from the system of turning on the lights to everything else. But now it's OK, I know my way round Gotenica. «

( picture: from film archives to military training)

**43./ TC 10.24.58**

**FRANC BERKOPEČ**

**Head of the Gotenica Training Centre**

» Since 1992 Gotenica has been a training centre for the needs of the Slovenian Police and the Ministry of Interior. The centre can provide lodging for about 200 participants at a time, and it also has adequate facilities for training and education. The centre has 55 employees who take care that training courses organised by the Police Academy are carried out as smoothly as possible.

**44./ TC 10.25.34**

**DAMJAN ŽAGAR**

**Police Academy**

» Those courses and training programmes are intended for future police candidates or tailored for the needs of current police force or special task force. There's a whole variety of courses: for canine handlers, mounted force, peacekeeping units and international police tasks, you name it. «

**45./ TC 10.26.06**

**FRANC BERKOPEČ**

**Head of the Gotenica Training Centre**

»This is not a highly restricted area any more, but an area with limited access, which simply means that it is open to organised visits provided that they are announced in advance and approved by the Police Administration.«

**TC 10.26.21****11- VOICE OVER:**

**Today Gotenica still has no permanent inhabitants. Some of those who had built it broke their vow of secrecy for the first time to speak for this film. However, many mysteries about the conception of Gotenica and seemingly voluntary labour in this strictly sealed area in four decades of its existence in former Yugoslavia remains unveiled because of lack of documented evidence.**

**TC 10.26.51****12- VOICE OVER ( CLOSURE)**

**Despite the public knowledge of the police activities in Gotenica this tiny place hidden deep in the vast oldest woods in Slovenia, remains mysterious even today. The heavy burden of the sufferings of so many people, who met their fate in Gotenica during the centuries, marks the village even today.**

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**CREDITS****GOTENICA**

a mysterious place of concealed history

Library footage used in the film comes from:

SLOVENIAN FILM ARCHIVES

SLOVENIAN FILM FUND

THE MUSEUM OF RECENT HISTORY

THE INSTITUTE OF RECENT HISTORY

SLOVENIAN NATIONAL ARCHIVES

RTV SLOVENIJA ARCHIVES

excerpt from the film

»EINE REISE NACH GOTTSCHEE«

by msgr. Joseph Trapp

and photographs and documents from

private collections of those participating in the film

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TV SLOVENIJA

2007

GOTENICA , BETWEEN LOVE AND FEAR

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| 10.03.33 | dr. MITJA FERENC, historian and advisor to the parliamentary commission for investigation on Gotenica - 1991 |
| 10.04.02 | TONE ŠEGA  |
| 10.04.51 | (archive footage from a film report propagating cattle-breeding in the Kočevska region)                      |
| 10.05.10 | TONE ŠEGA  |
| 10.05.53 | (film report propagating cattle-breeding in the Kočevska region)   |

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