

#SYMBOL OF VICTORY

Gautamiputra Satakarni and the Defeat of Nahapana

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One of the most striking examples of political symbolism in ancient Indian history is found in the coinage issued after the victory of Gautamiputra Satakarni, the great ruler of the Satavahana dynasty over Nahapana of the Western Kshatrapas. Instead of minting entirely new coins, Gautamiputra Satakarni adopted a simpler yet powerful method: he stamped his own name and symbols over Nahapana's existing coins. This act served both practical and symbolic purposes and clearly proclaimed the triumph of the Satavahanas over the Kshatrapas.

Historical Background

During the early centuries CE, the Deccan and western India were contested regions. The Western Kshatrapas, under rulers like Nahapana, had expanded their control into areas traditionally influenced by the Satavahanas. Nahapana issued a large number of silver coins that circulated widely in trade networks.

Gautamiputra Satakarni (c. 1st-2nd century CE) emerged as one of the most powerful Satavahana kings. Through successful military campaigns, he defeated Nahapana and reclaimed vast territories, including parts of present-day Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Malwa.

The Practice of Overstriking Coins

After his victory, Gautamiputra Satakarni did not immediately melt down Nahapana's coins or replace them with newly minted ones. Instead, he overstruck them, impressing his own name, titles, and symbols directly onto the existing Kshatrapa coins. This was an easy and efficient method for several reasons:

- It saved time and resources required to produce fresh coinage.
- It allowed uninterrupted circulation of currency in newly conquered regions.
- It ensured quick assertion of authority over the economic system.

Archaeological evidence shows Nahapana's portrait still faintly visible beneath Satakarni's inscriptions, making these coins powerful historical artifacts.

Symbolism of Victory

The overstruck coins carried deep symbolic meaning. By stamping his identity over Nahapana's face and legends, Gautamiputra Satakarni visually demonstrated:

- The complete political defeat of the Western Kshatrapas.
- The restoration of Satavahana sovereignty.
- The replacement of foreign rule with indigenous authority.

 In essence, the coins became moving proclamations of victory, circulating the message of Satavahana dominance throughout the former Kshatrapa territories.



An aerial photo showing Sobibor and its immediate surroundings.

● Bulbul Joshi

Knowledge of the uprising was limited to a select group to maintain the element of surprise. Organizers intended to mount the revolt and escape on October 13, when several key SS officers would be away from Sobibor. But a surprise visit by SS men from a different labour camp put the plan at risk, raising fears that the plot had been discovered. Ultimately, the men's arrival turned out to be a coincidence, and the uprising was rescheduled for the following day.

The 1943 Sobibor Uprising

Just before 3:30 p.m. on October 14, a messenger delivered a request from the tailors' foreman to Johann Niemann, the highest-ranking SS officer at Sobibor. The tailor was working on a leather coat for Niemann, the message said, and he wanted the officer to try it on before he continued with alterations. Niemann made his way to the workshop, leaving his horse's reins in the hands of a passing prisoner. The officer entered the room and placed his belt, which held his revolver on the table, then willingly donned the coat. As he turned his back to the tailor, a prisoner struck him on the head with an ax. Niemann had just enough time to scream before the prisoner dealt a second fatal blow. In a nearby barrack, Yehuda Lerner and Arkady Wajspapir awaited the arrival of SS man

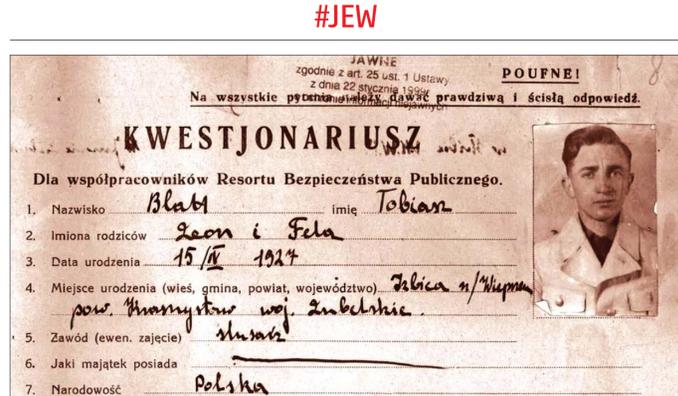


Sobibor personnel posing in front of a storage barracks in Lager II. Johann Niemann is holding the horse.

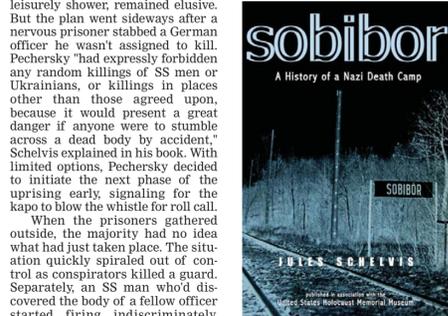
"Jews revolted. ... Some escaped. ... Foreign guards dead. ... Send help." PART:2

As survivors regrouped in the forest, they discussed how best to proceed, eventually splintering into smaller units that had better chances of evading notice. Blatt recalled Pechersky and several other men departing "by subterfuge," leaving with a collection of money and all but one of the requisitioned rifles, ostensibly to buy food but never coming back. (Nearly 40 years later, Blatt reunited with Pechersky and asked him about the incident. In response, all Pechersky could say was, "You were there. We were only people. The basic instincts came into play. It was still a fight for survival.")

#JEW



Identity papers for Sobibor survivor Thomas Blatt, also known as Toivi.



leisurely shower, remained elusive. But the plan went sideways after a nervous prisoner stabbed a German officer he wasn't assigned to kill. Pechersky "had expressly forbidden any random killings of SS men or Ukrainians, or killings in places other than those agreed upon, because it would present a great danger if anyone were to stumble across a dead body by accident," Schelvis explained in his book. With limited options, Pechersky decided to initiate the next phase of the uprising early, signaling for the kapo to blow the whistle for roll call. When the prisoners gathered outside, the majority had no idea what had just taken place. The situation quickly spiraled out of control as conspirators killed a guard. Separately, an SS man who'd discovered the body of a fellow officer started firing indiscriminately. According to Blatt, Pechersky jumped onto a table and delivered a speech to the confused crowd, telling them that most of their German captors were dead and there was no turning back. "Forward, comrades!" he reportedly cried. "For Stalin! Death to the fascists!"

In the ensuing chaos, prisoners fled towards the camp's outer fence, only to get caught in barbed wire and shot by guards firing down from the watchtowers. Many of those

who made it past the fence stepped on landmines scattered around the perimeter and were killed. "Corpses were everywhere," Blatt later recalled. "The noise of rifles, exploding mines, grenades and the chatter of machine guns assaulted my ears." After getting entangled in the barbed wire, he escaped by slipping out of his coat and running through the mine crates, falling several times as he pushed towards the forest. "Behind me, blood and ashes,"

The aftermath and legacy of the Sobibor Uprising

By Schelvis' count, around 365 of Sobibor's prisoners attempted to escape during the uprising. Only 200 or so made it into the surrounding forest, as more than 150 were killed as they tried to flee. The remaining Jews either had no opportunity to escape, as was the case for the Arbeit häftlinge in Lager III, who were cut off from the rest of the camp, or they chose to stay behind. In the immediate aftermath of the uprising, the Nazis debated whether local partisans had helped the Jewish prisoners. Frenzel, one of the few surviving SS officers, sent out a message requesting reinforcements, writing, "Jews revolted. ... Some escaped. ... Some SS officers, noncoms, foreign guards dead. ... Some Jews still in camp. ... Send help."

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A fire at Treblinka during the August 1943 prisoner uprising.

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As for Sobibor itself, the camp was soon razed, its remnants planted over with a pine forest. "The evidence should be destroyed as quickly as possible, now that all else has been destroyed," the officer in charge of Operation Reinhard advised. In response to the revolt, as well as a prisoner uprising at Treblinka in August 1943, the Nazis enacted Operation Harvest Festival, a mass execution of approximately 42,000 Polish Jews, including 18,400 at the Majdanek concentration camp in just one day.

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By the end of the day on October 15, the Nazis had executed all of Sobibor's remaining prisoners. Hundreds of German soldiers, Ukrainian guards, SS officers and policemen mobilized to hunt down the escapees, creating a dragnet that caught more than 100 prisoners within just nine days. Another 53 were killed by civilians, some of whom pretended to be willing to help the Jews, only to then shoot them in cold blood and steal their valuables. "We came out of



SS officer Johann Niemann riding through Lager II several months before the revolt.

Sobibor to be gunned down by the likes of these," survivor Bert Freiberg later reflected. Most of the escapees who survived did so by joining up with local partisans or sympathetic Poles.

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While the prisoners at Treblinka killed several non-SS guards during their revolt, Sobibor was the first Nazi camp where an organized Jewish resistance group managed to assassinate as many as a dozen German officers. "This in itself was of considerable importance," Schelvis argued in his book. "But perhaps, even more important was the psychological effect of the realization that Jewish people were, after all, capable of defeating some of their archenemies."

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#SEBASTOPOL GEESE

Bodies Like Soft Lace



The Elegant "Feathered Royals" of the Waterfowl World

Graceful, gentle, and remarkably beautiful, the Sebastopol goose is one of the most ornamental and admired breeds of domestic geese in the world. With their long, curling feathers that cascade down their bodies like soft lace, these birds have captured the attention of farmers, aviculturists, and bird lovers alike. Behind their striking appearance lies a fascinating history of careful breeding, adaptability, and timeless charm.

The Sebastopol goose originated in Eastern Europe, near the Black Sea region, and takes its name from the city of Sevastopol (Sebastopol) in Crimea. Believed to have been developed from wild graylag geese, the breed spread across Europe during the nineteenth century, where it became known for its extraordinary feather structure. The Sebastopol was formally recognized in England in 1860 and later in North America, where it quickly gained popularity as a prized exhibition and ornamental breed. Originally called "Danubian geese," they were admired not for their productivity but for their aesthetic appeal and gentle temperament.

The Sebastopol's most distinctive feature is its long, white, curled plumage that drapes elegantly over its body, giving it an almost angelic appearance. The feathers are loose, soft, and spiraled, particularly around the chest and back, which makes the bird look as though it is wrapped in silk. While white is the most common color, variations such as buff, gray, and saddleback also exist, though they are rarer. Adult males generally weigh between twelve and fourteen pounds, while females range from ten to twelve. Their bright blue eyes, along with an orange bill and legs, complete their striking appearance. Because of their loose feathering, however, Sebastopol geese are not strong fliers and require protection from wet or cold conditions, as their feathers do not provide as much insulation as other breeds.

Known for their docile and friendly nature, Sebastopol geese are among the gentlest of all domestic geese. They are social animals that enjoy human interaction and tend to coexist peacefully with other birds and livestock. Their calm temperament makes them ideal for small farms, gardens, and even as ornamental companions in park settings. Despite their delicate appearance, they are relatively hardy when given proper care and shelter, adapting well to temperate climates. Caring for Sebastopol geese requires a bit more attention than for other breeds, mainly due to their special plumage. They thrive best in clean, dry environments, as excessive moisture can cause feather matting or infections. Providing a balanced diet of grains, greens, and access to fresh, clean water supports both their health and feather quality. They also enjoy swimming, and access to a pond or shallow pool helps keep their feathers clean and well-maintained. Because of their heavy feathering, breeders often assist with incubation or hatching to ensure good fertility rates, as the thick plumage can sometimes interfere with natural



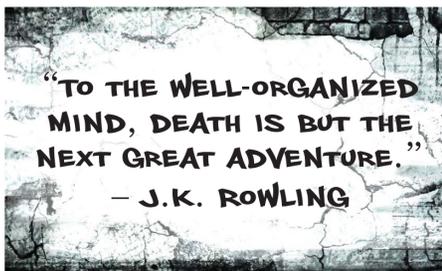
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Today, Sebastopol geese are considered a rare heritage breed, and while not endangered, their numbers remain limited. Dedicated breeders and aviculture enthusiasts work diligently to preserve their lineage and maintain the health and purity of the breed. Their continued existence is a testament to both human care and nature's artistry, symbolizing the perfect harmony between aesthetic beauty and gentle disposition.

In essence, the Sebastopol goose stands as a living work of art. With their flowing feathers and serene demeanour, these birds remind us that nature's creations can be as elegant as any human design. Whether gliding gracefully across a pond or resting in the sunlight, Sebastopol geese embody peace, grace, and timeless beauty, true "feathered royals" in the world of waterfowl.



THE WALL



BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman