



The Washington mansion of ex-ambassador Joseph Davies.



Joseph Davies, of "Mission to Moscow" fame, and wife.

# EX-HUSBAND OF POSTUM HEIRESS BITES THE HAND

## *that once fed him!*

BY JIM SHAWCROSS

**N**OT since the Good Book exposed cafe society in Sodom and Gomorrah have the doings of the gilded set been aired with such devastating candor as that of a notorious continental writer who was once married to one of America's richest women.

The brutally frank, breast-beating "confessions" of this self-styled international four-flusher clear up with one fell swoop the mystery that puzzled high society a decade or so ago: how the penniless son of an infamous Central European blackmailer managed to infiltrate into the inner sanctum of America's snootiest cavedwellers and get away with the prize catch of the 1941 social season.

It is now all told in purple in the masochistic memoirs of the vindictive ex-husband. American readers won't get a chance of sampling its sizzling pages till the fall. But here is an exclusive preview of the sexy expose whose revelations are likely to spoil the fun of the gilded set during the coming social season.

### Much-Married Heiress

The author of this desperate expose is Janos Bekessy, better known as Hans Habe, the pen name under which he wrote a dozen books, including one that made the best-seller lists in the United States.

Bekessy alias Habe is the ex-husband of Eleanor Close Sturges Etienne Rand de Bekessy Johnson Barzin of the Social Register, much-married stepdaughter of ambassador Joseph E. Davies of Mission to Moscow fame, beautiful granddaughter of Charles William Post of the Postum zillions.

In 1941, Habe wormed his way to the hardest core of America's best society by wooing and conquering the Postum heiress with what he himself now calls a pack of lies.

The high spot of his current confessions is the now-it-can-be-told, no-holds-barred account of his blitz affair and subsequent marriage with the lovely sharecropper of General

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## In a savage attack on American high society, a self-confessed Continental highbinder smears the "capitalist parvenu" of the United States.

foods. Habe calls it the turning point of his life. It isn't known what pretty Eleanor calls it.

Now an American citizen, Bekessy alias Habe was born in Budapest, Hungary, forty-four years ago, but a more cosmopolitan mongrel would be hard to find. He grew up in Austria, served in the French Foreign Legion, and in the United States Army in World War II.

He posed as a student prince in Heidelberg, conjured up journalistic scoops in Vienna, raced his supercharged Talbot on the Riviera, lectured on military tactics at West Point, and wrote "B" pictures in Hollywood.

### Figment of Own Imagination

But chiefly, he walked boldly where even Casanova would have tiptoed. A ruthless, insatiable and vindictive male, he used up five wives and now wallows in the morass of his amorous memories.

In his "confessions," Habe presents himself as the villainous figment of his own imagination, an egomaniac of vast proportions—half genius and half con-man. He doesn't hesitate to describe himself as a helpless schizophrenic, a man with a split personality. As he himself puts it, he is amoral and even immoral in his personal life and love affairs, a congenital liar in everything except his writings.

He now turns on his ex-wife, her family and friends, with the deadly venom of a vindictive rattler, devouring the hand which once literally fed him when, as Habe himself puts it, he was in debt up to his ears.

Habe insists that he conquered the heart of the gorgeous heiress simply because he was irresistible. "I had great talent," he writes with characteristic modesty. "I was exceptionally handsome, and had great qualities of the heart."

But when he has thus paid fulsome tribute to his qualifications as an indomitable suitor, he concedes that he won Eleanor, not because he was so strong, but because she was so weak. Eleanor fell for him, Habe admits, because she was naive, lonesome, a pampered snob; because she was an easy target for continental smoothies, and infatuated with the glitter of European aristocracy.

### Blitzkrieg in Washington

Habe found this out at their very first tete-a-tete in Eleanor's Washington home, and promptly put on the heat. He posed as a Hungarian nobleman, with a title and a coat of arms in an enormous signet ring, although in fact he was the son of a swindler and had the ring "borrowed" from a former mistress of his.

Eleanor swooned at the sight of this tall, bleached blond, honey-voiced ersatz knight who promised to make her both happy and a baroness.

Habe blitz-krieged Eleanor Close during one of his Washington lectures, given in the palatial home of her mother, Mrs.



Janos Bekessy, alias Hans Habe, in 1942 with Eleanor, who was then his wife. She is the stepdaughter of Joseph Davies and the granddaughter of Charles Post of the Postum zillions.

Marjorie Post Close Hutton Davies, whose own third husband is the famous Joseph E. Davies, one-time Ambassador to Soviet Russia. Habe was floored—if not for long—by the sumptuous splendor of this fantastic mansion, known to Washington's cavedwellers as "Tregaron."

"It was not a house," Habe wrote, "not even a castle in the conventional sense of the word; rather a building with salons in which one could get lost, with paintings from an art gallery, with a movie theatre, with staircases which seemed to be borrowed from a music hall. Old Russian ikons hung on the walls like posters in a newspaper office; . . . photographs in silver frames were scattered about, some of them family portraits, others pictures of

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Anyone sitting on the terraces of me's popular cafes frequented by Americans in general and G-girls in particular, has ample opportunity to catch the big parade and observe the air-spangled Roman holiday, especially the dawn's early light.

### Mrs. Luce's Ultimatum

When Mrs. Luce issued her ultimatum to curb both libations and libidos, there came a hushed spell of obstinence. Unfortunately, little effort was made to put teeth into the order. Some of the G-girls sneaked back to the "Snake Pit" and the other bits as soon as the heat cooled off.

Former Senator Robert C. Hendrickson was one of the numerous lawmakers

who thought that a good hard Congressional look into these conditions is long overdue. But if he shied away from it while he was in the Senate it was only because he didn't want to soil the reputation of the many for the sake of a few escapadists.

Mrs. Luce is one of the American envoys who has tried to stop this carousal. Although she hasn't been able to stamp it out entirely, she did succeed in calming down her gals to some extent. But there are still too many of these excesses, in Rome and elsewhere.

Bibulous G-gals will continue to put a shiner on Uncle Sam's good eye unless someone decides to wean these babies from their bottles.

—Janos Bekessy alias Hans Habe takes his nostalgic revenge by exposing his former wife's social set. He makes it primarily responsible for the breakage in his fragile marital bliss.

Since Habe is both a dangerous foe and a gifted writer, American high society gets a trouncing from him such as it has seldom received from any of its past renegades.

### Worm's Eye View of High Society

According to Habe, the pampered members of America's Four Hundred are pitiful parasites and pig-headed, conceited, arrogant snobs. They are such dilettantes that even their snobbishness is amateurish. Here are the highlights of Habe's so-called case against American socialites:

1. They are the most bigoted in the world. Their anti-Semitism and racial prejudice made him shudder.
2. They are sexually frustrated, hence sex-mad; the men are impotent and the women frigid.
3. They don't know how to dress.
4. Since they have no manners, they have to hire social secretaries and English butlers to show them how to treat their guests.
5. They buy "old masters" but don't know the difference between a Rembrandt and an *Esquire* cartoon.
6. They are parasites who languish between barbarism and decadence; but even their decadence is only a poor imitation of Europe's decaying aristocracy.
7. The third generation looks down on the second; and the second is ashamed of the first because of the smell of the sweat that made all those millions.

Today Habe lives in a Swiss-type chalet on the shores of picturesque Lake Wolfgang in Austria, free-lancing for German magazines and writing books and a column for a California paper.

Still the schizophrenic, Habe on the one hand poses as an American patriot, and on the other maintains that "the parvenu capitalism of the United States is not capable of a certain adaptability and flexibility which characterizes Europe's older capitalist systems in their efforts towards self-preservation."

From his broken bliss with the fabulously wealthy heiress, the impostor husband draws a strange conclusion.

The man who sneaked into the gilded set with an array of lies, concludes his survey of his ex-wife's caste with a statement that sounds mighty strange.

Wrote Habe, as the lesson he learned from his marriage with the Postum heiress:

"I consider it a fatal tragedy that the defense of the capitalist world is entrusted to American hands . . ."

## EX-HUBBY OF POSTUM HEIRESS

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the great men of our time, of Roosevelt and Stalin, Churchill and King Leopold, with their own handwritten dedications."

But this splendor was merely a backdrop. Habe actually conquered Eleanor in her own more modest home in Washington, within an hour or two of his arrival in town, between her bedroom and bath, if you want to believe this particular "confession" of the indiscreet ex-husband.

The decisive scene is described by Habe as unforgettable.

### Bedroom Scene

Wrote he: "As I changed in her bedroom, I will never forget it, while she tinkered in the adjoining bath, and as we continued our eager conversation through the closed door, an intimacy developed through this bedroom-bath chat that could not have been surpassed by any more innermost intimacy."

That same night Eleanor drove him to Union Station for the trip back to West Point where Habe then lived as a paying guest in the compound's Thayer Hotel. They were driven in a stately Cadillac, Eleanor sitting next to the chauffeur, Habe musing on the back seat. He was determined to marry her, on two immediately evident grounds. The combination of her obvious munificence and "the peachy little hair at the back of her white neck" had made Eleanor irresistible to her brand new friend.

A few days later they met in the New York mansion of Eleanor's mother on upper Fifth Avenue, went to a show and to supper at "21." There a fortune-

teller opened the floodgates of Eleanor's memory and loosened her tongue. She confided to Habe that she had been married three times, whereupon Habe told her he had been married twice. This confession brought tears to Eleanor's eyes and Habe now says this encouraged him to propose at once.

"It was our second meeting," he writes. "It was our engagement."

He describes his wedding under the title, "Oxygen Bottles and Wedding Night," and reveals that Mrs. Davies arranged for two huge oxygen bottles to be held in readiness in their bridal suite at the old Hotel Ritz, in case Eleanor should faint on her wedding night.

The marriage lasted for four years and it needed a lot of oxygen to keep it alive. The couple moved into a house on Kalorama Circle, one of Washington's most chichi neighborhoods, next door to the huge, ornate French Embassy. Eleanor Close became Madame Eleanor de Bekessy, in line with Habe's phony title. Her servants called Eleanor "the Baroness" and Habe "the Baron."

Now looking back with jaundiced eyes on his four years in the gilded cage as the husband of an authentic American heiress—at whose side he reached the pinnacle of his hectic career in love