



## The Exile: Sex, Drugs, and Libel in the New Russia

By Mark Ames, Matt Taibbi, Edward Limonov

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The eXile is the controversial biweekly tabloid founded by Americans Mark Ames and Matt Taibbi that Rolling Stone has called "cruel, caustic, and funny" and "a must-read." In the tradition of gonzo journalists like Hunter S. Thompson, Ames and Taibbi cover everything from decadent club scenes to the nation's collapsing political and economic systems - no person or institution is spared from their razor sharp satiric viewpoint. They take you beneath the surface of the Russia that most Western journalists cover, bringing to life the metropolis that Ames describes as "manic, nihilistic, grotesque, horrible; and yet, in its own way, far superior to any city on Earth." Featuring artwork and articles from their groundbreaking newspaper, The eXile is the inside story of how the tabloid came to be and how Ames and Taibbi broke their biggest stories - all the while playing hysterically vicious practical jokes, racking up innumerable death threats, and ingesting a motherlode of speed. It's a darkly funny, up-close profile of the sordid underbelly of the New World Order that you will never forget.

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## **Editorial Review**

From Publishers Weekly

In 1997, two American college-educated slackers began publishing the eXile, a no-holds-barred newspaper, in Moscow. The paper includes irreverent discussions of Russia's sex and drug scene and off-color humor pieces, such as an article poking fun at a U.S. African-American basketball player who was toiling for a Moscow team after he was kicked out of the NBA following a forced sodomy charge in the U.S. Their attitude toward Russia's expatriate community, including themselves, is clear: "Any affluent or even middle-class American who renounces the good life of sushi and 50-channel cable delivery" is "motivated by a highly destructive personality defect." The pranks the newspaper plays are entertaining: convincing an aide to Mikhail Gorbachev that New York Jets football coach Bill Parcells wanted the former Soviet leader to give a series of inspirational pep talks to his team, for example. The eXile also takes on the herd mentality of reporters, managing to convince one of its rival papers that basketball hall-of-famer Wilt Chamberlain was considering a comeback in Russia. (In between its humor and its testosterone, the eXile has reported some important stories, most notably that much aid money from the U.S. went directly into the hands of some top Russian politicians.) Only those with a National Lampoon mentality will enjoy the descriptions of the editors' sexual conquests and their comparisons of Russian and American women. Like much of the paper itself, the book, which recounts the newspaper's history, is tasteless. There's little doubt, however, that both incisively probe contemporary Russian reality--and the expatriate mindset. (Mar.)

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From Library Journal

Full of drugs, sex, and booze, this book initially strikes one as an ode to bad taste. The authors, editors of the English-language Moscow tabloid newspaper The eXile, know this: "we stood for all the wrong things--but at least we weren't bores." True enough. Still, Chapter 3 has good reporting on USAID, the World Bank/IMF, and the Investor Protection Fund and how they waste money and benefit the Russian rich. Similarly, Chapter 8 contains news items (e.g., former Yeltsin adviser Anatoly Chubais's "loans-for-shares" auctions) incorrectly analyzed in the Moscow press, along with the correct analysis by the editors of The eXile. The authors also describe The eXile's first year, 1997, which one editor saw as his "first experience...with taking life seriously." Like most coming-of-age stories, this is bittersweet. Recommended for academic libraries collecting in Russian studies or journalism.

--*Bert Beynen, Des Moines Area Community Coll. Lib., IA*

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