

*Enrique Gallud Jardiel*

*Doctor in Spanish Philology, Enrique Gallud is also a university professor, writer and essayist.*

## REVIEW

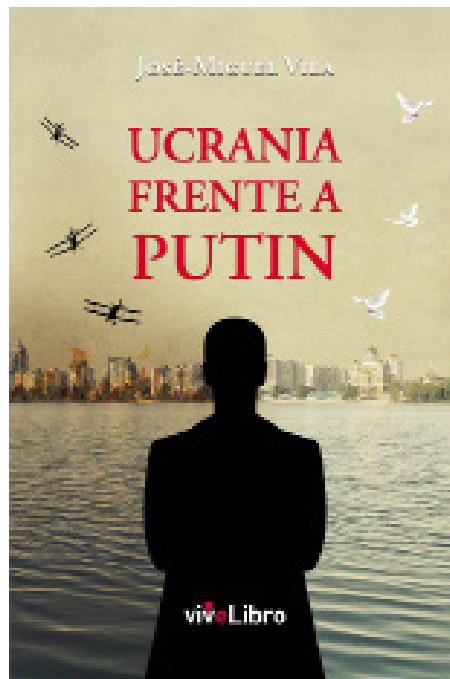
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### OF THE BOOK: UKRAINE: FROM INDEPENDENCE TO CONFLICT WITH MOSCOW

*Authors: José Miguel Vila.*

*Editorial: ViveLibro Ediciones, Madrid, 2014.*

*ISBN: 9788416317530. (148 pages)*



The opinions which, the leading journalist and writer José Miguel Vila offers in his frequent journalistic columns or in his participation in debates, are always of great interest and extraordinarily suggestive. They reflect very relevant aspects of how our world and the present moment continue to evolve.

In his latest, recently published book, *Ukraine frente a Putin*, he hits the target once again as he did previously with his other studies: *Con otra Mirada* (With another look) (2003), *Mujeres del mundo* (Women of the World) (2005), *Prostitución: vidas quebradas* (Prostitution: Broken Lives) (2008), *Dios, ahora* (God, now) (2010) and *Modas infames* (Infamous Fashions) (2013).

As can be deduced from the titles of subjects José Miguel turned his attention to previously, just like Publio Terencio Africano before him, no human issue is foreign to him. And this is why he has decided to review and untangle the drama that the people of Ukraine have been going through in the last few years. The political and social experience accumulated by the author of the work under review place him in an ideal position to theorise on one of the most outstanding events we have witnessed in recent times, the gravity of which has been played down by western media, in their eternal desire for achieving variety; as if the purpose of their activity was not that of truth, but merely the search for superficial entertainment.

The author is very conscious of what he wants to express and, of course, also how he has to put it in black and white. Finding the echo that his reflections deserve. He adds elegance of expression and considerable aesthetic accomplishment to a subject of great density. He is interested in everything and with his lucid and profound prose he obliges the rest of us to also become interested in the issue he writes about. On this occasion he offers us an enlightening and precise vision of the events in Ukraine, which in 2014 experienced a crucial year, following revolts, resignations, elections, invasions, accidents and all kinds of political tension.

Firstly, the book presents us with the roots of the conflict: the question of the identity of Ukrainians and Russians and their manifestly uncomfortable relations as neighbours. He provides us with a background to the situation in *Ukrajina* (the official name of the country), following its proclamation as an independent state, in the year 1991. It was then that Kiev officially separated from a Soviet Unión that was in the process of disintegration. José Miguel Vila describes all the most relevant developments in the formation of the new Ukrainian state: from the demise of President Yanukovich, who leaned towards the protection of Moscow, or the student revolution of Euromaidan, up to the days when the conflict erupted that still affects the country. He analyses the position that the government of Vladimir Putin adopted in relation to its neighbours, apart from analysing the attitude demonstrated by the third actor in the conflict: the European Union. The author considers the eternal problem of Crimea and the risk of an indefinitely prolonged war. On the other hand he correctly assesses the present moment, while venturing to evaluate what are the possibilities of each one of the scenarios that could arise in the short and medium

term. He does this with impeccable precision and a clarity that is much appreciated by those of us who are not specialists in the political situation of that region of Europe, so convulsed and so attractive at one and the same time.

The chapters into which the book is structured are appropriate. Each one is divided into two parts: the first of which includes a description of the events with detailed, in-depth information, and a second which discusses the considerations arising from the facts. Ideas follow the data, in separate sections.

The includes work diverse opinions of experts from the military and legal fields; but —what is much more interesting— it also includes a variety of testimonials from Ukrainian citizens who makes us aware of the ethos of this people, without ambiguity. Vila does not get involved in a meticulous, erudite analysis of the information on the conflict, but takes us directly to the feelings of those most directly affected by the conflict.

There is also room in the book for relating how, and to what extent, the media have dealt with this conflict. The most noteworthy opinion articles are mentioned, the most enlightening interviews, as are also indicated the reactions in relation to each of the different episodes which the process of confrontation between Kiev and Moscow underwent.

Even in an academic subscription publication such as this one, we may allow ourselves to underline that this is a work which fulfils its purpose to perfection. Wherever we open the book, we are compelled to continue reading. We would encourage readers to immerse themselves in its 150 pages and, like ourselves, extract the knowledge contained therein concerning the Ukrainian conflict.

