La Moneda, 11 de septiembre
Author:
Francisco Aguilera
Reader:
Ruth Clarke

La Moneda, 11 de septiembre (La Moneda, September 11)

This excellent work of non-fiction is a new account, based on eye-witness statements, of one of the most important days in Chile's history: 11 September 1973, when the Chilean military overthrew the Popular Unity government led by Salvador Allende.

It is structured as short texts in five different parts: a summary of events focusing on the goings on inside La Moneda; accounts from the witnesses; a summary of events focusing on Pinochet's preparations and movements on the day; a second set of accounts from the witnesses; and concluding general observations about the building and the damage it suffered. The sections are short, packed with details, and very readable.

This book initially brought to mind work featuring witnesses' and relatives' accounts of the US 9/11, such as the film United 93, or books like Flight 93 by Tom McMillan. It is also reminiscent of classic first person accounts of historic military moments, such as The Gulag Archipelago, Homage to Catalonia, or even If This Is a Man. None of the witnesses goes into depth on the politics of the event, although they each make it plain whether or not they supported Allende, regardless of the job they were there to do.

This book is a good candidate for translation. There is an interest in Chilean history amongst British and American readers, given the close relationships between the governments over the years. Historical non-fiction about Chile tends to come in the form of biographies, or an overview of the Pinochet regime and its horrors, it is unusual to find an account that focuses exclusively on the day of the coup…. La Moneda, 11 septiembre is sufficiently different in its form and approach to complement the existing broader works rather than replicating what is already available in English. It offers an alternative and personal perspective that would be fascinating for readers already familiar with the events and a novel introduction for others, attracting readers who prefer a more narrative approach.

From the reader´s report by .