

September 1, 1933

**Primorsk Region Oblispolkom, 'Memorandum Report
on the Question of the Criminal Conditions in
Building No. 10, 'MILLIONKA'**

Citation:

"Primorsk Region Oblispolkom, 'Memorandum Report on the Question of the Criminal Conditions in Building No. 10, 'MILLIONKA'", September 1, 1933, Wilson Center Digital Archive, GAPK f. 25, op. 6, 1933, d. 4, l. 13-15. Obtained and translated by Austin Jersild. <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/116793>

Summary:

Addressed to the Oblispolkom, or district administration and executive committee, this report shows concerns about the Chinese population in the far eastern Primorsky region. The "Millionka" were a series of large apartments that housed thousands of Chinese in the Chinese quarter of the Vladivostok and their destruction was part of a series of Stalinist deportations which targeted the Chinese and Korean populations of the city. This document shows the Soviet administrator's deep suspicion of Asian communities and ethnic connections, which they perceived as mysterious, limitless, transnational, and inevitably related to "banditism," "hooliganism," drug use, and various criminal activities. The report identifies the Millionka as home to a wide variety of criminal activity and disorder (drug use, prostitution, blackmarket trade, drunkenness), as well as a source of "an anti-Soviet element with counterrevolutionary goals."

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

SECRET

TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE OBLISPOLKOM, c. VOL'SKII
Memorandum report

On the question of the criminal conditions in Building No. 10, "MILLIONKA," on Semenovsk Street at the corner of Koreisk.

1. The condition of the building

The building is located on the corner of Semenovsk and Koreisk streets, and from both sides has "main gates" on to the streets. At the sides of the entrance to both gates there are located Chinese traders—lotki, Chinese-style cooking, soup makers (kipiatil'niki), dining halls, shopkeepers under the signs "Red Partisan," OBLKOMPOM, [and] "PROMSOIUZ." Many trade "alone," peddling vodka, cigarettes, and contraband, and recommending places for meetings with prostitutes and so on—in general there is an abundance of this at the gate at Semenovsk street (see photographs No. 1-4).

This situation is further facilitated by the fact that the house is right next to a collective farm barracks and bazaar, which makes the "MILLIONKA" house very popular (see photograph No. 5).

The courtyard of the house has many of these shops, dining halls, confectioneries, and so on, with the opportunity for the trading of all sorts of goods. All of these goods are provided by the traders; all of this is complemented by an underground trade in vodka, which in this region is primarily handled by Chinese enterprises, just as all the trade in this house is headed by Chinese citizens (see photos 6 and 7).

In the courtyard of the "MILLIONKA" there are baths, a movie theater, warehouses, many apartments and in this house from 6 in the morning until 12 at night there are people constantly buying and selling, fighting, and behaving like hooligans and rogues. This is what is distinctive about this house.

After midnight they close the gates and all this activity moves into the apartments of the building. The building has an abundance of corridors and underground passageways, and all the buildings are connected to each to each other by bridge crossings, and therefore everyone walking out into the courtyard is connected to all the other interior houses of the so-called "MILLIONKA" (see photographs 8-9).

2. The internal view of the "MILLIONKA".

The house is located at the corner of No. 10/12. Semenovsk and Koreisk streets have some 200 apartments, and to this it is necessary to add that each apartment is partitioned into sections of one to four [rooms], and there are small shops.

Along this corridor in the winter and summer you can imagine the goings-on at night, where hundreds of people huddle together, primarily Chinese (see photograph No. 10-11).

3. The Characteristics of criminality and crime at the "MILLIONKA"

The primary ingrained (zakorenelym) form of criminality at the MILLIONKA are the narcotics dens, such as: morphine, and opium smoking, which leads to other sorts of crime, such as the theft of goods and valuables; the resale of stolen goods, prostitution, all of this is closely inter-related (see photograph No. 12-20).

Second—the trade in vodka, contraband, and from this—hooliganism, knifings, murder on the basis of drunkenness, the sharing of the “profit,” and

Third—the appearance of an anti-Soviet element with counterrevolutionary goals, which is able to find for itself a base and lodging place, and even “sympathizers” from among the ranks of declassé (deklassirovannykh) people, including other criminals (see photographs No. 21-28).

Above all, this building is extremely unsanitary, and the source of diverse kinds of epidemics, that is, the people visiting this building easily can contract diseases from the people living there, and easily spread these insects throughout the entire city (see photograph No.).

The renter of the apartment, like the renter of the store, although recently under the banner of a social organization, is difficult to find. You can always meet some “agent” (doverennoe) figure or “purchaser” who is conducting some sort of “operation” for which all the profit is given directly to the “owner.”

Every apartment has their tenants; lodgers at night, prostitutes and narcotics dens in the evening, speculators and contraband dealers in the day.

Quite a few people are engaged in the sale of stolen goods, the resale of the stolen materials they receive from the thieves as a tax, and several are the warehousemen of contraband goods, goods for trade not only inside the “MILLIONKA” but outside of it.

“MILLIONKA” is the largest black brick building, which draws in to itself absolutely all of the above-mentioned types of crime. It includes Chinese prayer houses, Chinese fortune-telling houses, and other forms of swindle (see photographs No. 22-24).

4. Practical measures

The building should be cleansed not only from the drug sellers and narcotics dens, but taken away from its owner, who at the present time is a Chinese subject (poddannyi).

To change the internal structure of the building, [we need to] liquidate the massive partitions in each apartment, as these partitions are dangerous and susceptible to fire. We must deport from the building those individuals not engaged in socially-useful labor, and create sanitary conditions in the building and the apartments.

The composition of the shops should be looked over by social organizations, as absolutely nothing distinguishes them from private firms except for the banner above them [of a social organization, serving as a cover name for these trading enterprises].

Along with this we need to resolve the question of whether or not the barracks near the “MILLIONKA” is necessary, moving it to another part of the city, clean up this square, which on the one hand is connected to the “MILLIONKA,” and from the other—with the bay and next to the House of the Collective Farmer (Dom kolkhoznika). In such a way, instead of a house of narcotics and an unsanitary building we can have one of the finest workers buildings, which can serve a certain quantity of people with a theater, a dining hall, baths, and so on.

Malaja “MILLIONKA”

Under this name until 1929, without conflict, existed Building No. [blank] along Semenovsk [street], which was then given to Dal'zavod, where workers live and the building took on the appearance of a home for laborers. But because this building was across the street from the "MILLIONKA" it acquired the reputation as being the "MALAIA MILLIONKA" [Little Millionka], which is how it is known among its inhabitants and is little distinguishable from the "MILLIONKA," except for the quantity of houses inside it and its location. The building is located on Semenovsk Street, No. [blank]—its main gates and entrance is on Peking Street. Throughout the entire courtyard are located the same trading enterprises under the same banners of social organizations, only with a greater quantity of unsanitary, drunk hooligans. Naturally, because the building is smaller in size than the "MILLIONKA" its population density is more visible and noticeable. Just like the "MILLIONKA" the building is dangerous, plagued by epidemics, and susceptible to fire. In general the building is indistinguishable from the "MILLIONKA" except in its size. The building belongs to [blank] and is inhabited by 500 people who are "registered" inhabitants and it has 50 trading stalls (see photographs No. 25-29).

Just like the other one, this building should be liquidated.

Commander of Administration RK Police of Primorsk Region Seliutin

Information

1. Building number—Semenovsk 3, Koreisk 12—MILLIONKA—belongs to two owners: Semenovsk No. 3 to the Chinese citizen Wang Yinang, living in Shanghai. His subordinate Wang Folu lives on Batarein street No. 2 and at present has gone to China, notes his subordinate Wang Pugeng, who lives on Batarein No. 2, in the office of the building owner. In the building at Semenovsk No. 3 there are 49 apartments, with more than 300 people (the exact figure has not been determined, but 125 people are registered, and it has 2 underground lodging rooms, 3 confectioneries, 3 restaurant dining halls and other commercial enterprises, a bath and a theater. Workers and clerks in the building number not more than 50, and the rest are not engaged in socially-useful labor.
2. Building No. 12 on Koreisk street, in this same MILLIONKA, belongs to the Chinese citizen Wang Kengxiu, who at present is in Chifu. His agent is the same person as at Semenovsk No. 3, and in this building there are 150 apartments, more than 1000 inhabitants, stores, and other trading organizations.
3. "Malaia Millionka" also belongs to two owners; part of the side on Semenovsk No. 8 belongs to the Chinese citizen Cheng Chingzhou, living in Harbin, at Pekin No. 5, and Ching Lousang, living in Chifu. The agent of both buildings is Deng Yulou, living at Semenovsk No. 8 in apartment 33/3. The building has 400 inhabitants, 15 trading stalls, 4 dining halls, 2 confectioneries, 4 warehouses, and other commercial spaces. Up to 50% of the inhabitants work. The pay for the apartments is gathered by collectors at a rate of from 20-30 to 300 rubles per month for the apartment and even higher, and beyond this the inhabitants themselves provide coal to other inhabitants. (This information was obtained from the testimony of the cleaning staff [dvornikov].)

Commander of Administration of RK of the Police of Primorsk Region
Seliutin