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Communists, Locals Defend Seafood-Guzzling Cat Over Midnight Feast in Store

By Alexey Eremenko

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A cat was filmed helping himself from the display case of an airport fishmonger's in Vladivostok.

Perhaps it is the effect of the economic crisis, but a cat that gorged itself on caviar and other seafood delicacies in a Russian fish store just may get away with it, as people across the nation united in his support.

The unidentified ginger feline was filmed helping himself from the display case of an airport fishmonger's in the far eastern port of Vladivostok, Russia's fish-and-caviar capital.

The animal's nocturnal raid cost the store an estimated 63,000 rubles ($1,100) in fish, squid and other fishy treats, according to the store's shocked and bewildered administration.

The store owners' outrage prompted locals to start a search-and-rescue operation for the cat, fearing he could be slain in retribution, local news website Deita.ru said Friday.

The animal, which reportedly resides near the airport, has not been seen in public since his midnight feast.

But while some may loathe him, others lionize him: A small Communist party said it had accepted the "ginger, whiskered Bolshevik" into its ranks (in absentia).

The plunder of "imperialist prawn" was retribution against the bourgeoisie, the Communists of St. Petersburg and the Leningrad Region said on their website.

"He ate it on behalf of all of us, and purred on behalf of all of us," said the minor group, known for treading the line between populism and deadpan parody (among other things, it accused James Cameron of stealing the idea for "Avatar," the highest-grossing film in history, from Soviet sci-fi).

The group has assigned the cat the name Vasily in honor of Vasily Chapayev, a Civil War-era Bolshevik commander — and hero of many jokes in Russia.

To its credit, the store's administration has not been reported as taking any action beyond demanding that the airport pays up for the cat's gourmet dining experience.

But even this may be tricky to enforce, because in the event of accidental property damage, the property owner bears sole responsibility, the Consumer Rights Protection Society said.

And the damage was clearly accidental because the perpetrator — a cat — cannot be held legally responsible, the independent watchdog said on its website.

"The cat ought to be rewarded for exposing the hidden flaws of the retail equipment," the group said, referring to the unlocked food stall that allowed the hungry kitty to penetrate the store's defenses.

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