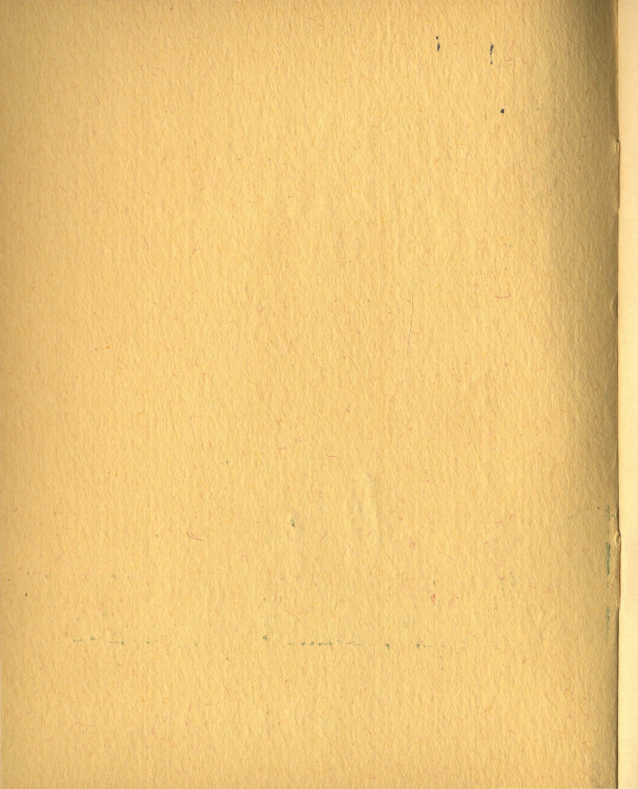


HOW SOVIET WORKERS SPEND THEIR LEISURE

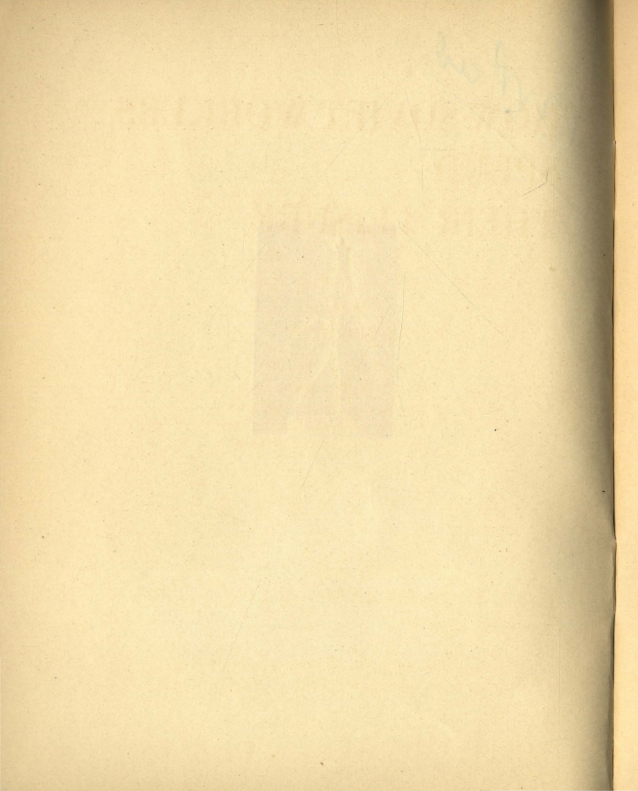


BY I. KOROB OV



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HOW SOVIET WORKERS SPEND THEIR LEISURE

By I. KOROBov

ORDER OF LENIN, ETC.,
BLAST FURNACEMAN,
MEMBER OF THE SUPREME
SOVIET OF THE UKRAINIAN
SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

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I am an old blast furnaceman. For forty years I have been working in the big iron and steel works in the city of Makeyevka, in the center of the Donetz Basin. In eighteen years prior to the Revolution I never once had a real rest. We worked twelve hours a day, every day of the week. On Saturdays we would come to the works in the evening and leave on Sunday, after eighteen hours continuous work. We toiled like slaves—and not a single day of rest in eighteen years!

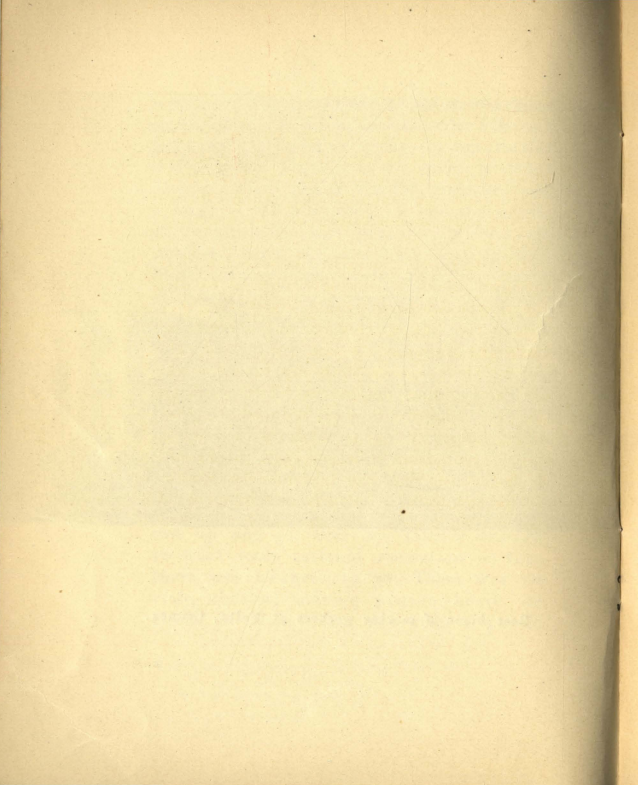
Thousands upon thousands of workers like myself would come home after a day of hard and wasting labor, dead tired and

worn out, too exhausted to do more than throw ourselves down on our beds. I lived with my family—five of us—in one small stuffy room. There was no space to turn around. One could hardly breathe on account of the heat, bad air and the smell of cooking. It was particularly bad in summer. After the scorching heat at the blast furnace one could find no relief at home, and there was no place where one could take a shower or a swim. One could not cool off in the shade of a tree, because there were practically none. The only garden in the city belonged to the director of the works and was always guarded by two policemen. We workers were strictly forbidden to trespass in the garden. The only way to escape the heat was to go to sleep in some cellar.

Even if a man had had a chance to rest up and get over his fatigue enough to want some rational recreation or fun, there was nowhere to go. There was no club, theater, moving picture house, or circus in Makeyevka; not even a public



Rest home of marine workers at Yalta, Crimea.



garden where one might take a walk, listen to music or dance.

It goes without saying that a worker could not even dream of a real vacation, of a trip to the country, to a health resort, rest home or sanatorium. Such things existed only for our bosses, not for working-men.

The October Socialist Revolution has brought about a complete change in the life of the working people. From the very outset the Soviet Government introduced the eight-hour day. A law was passed providing for vacations with pay for all workers and office employees. The working day for adolescents was reduced to four or six hours. A four to six-hour day, without a reduction in wages, was introduced in industries that are injurious to health.

The successful economic development of the Soviet Union and the increasing improvement in the well-being of the working people enabled the Soviet Government to reduce the working day still further. On the tenth anniversary of the

Soviet power the Central Executive Committee of the Union passed a law introducing the seven-hour day in the overwhelming majority of industries throughout the country.

At present the workers of the Soviet Union have the shortest working day in the world—seven hours—and the shortest week—working five days and resting the sixth.

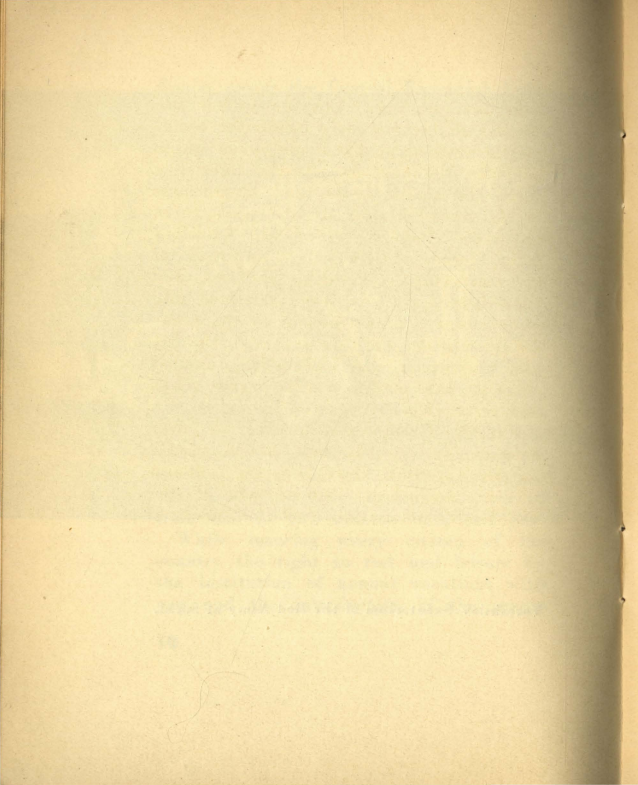
Office employees and brain workers have a six-hour day.

Every worker and office employee in the Soviet Union gets an annual vacation with full pay for at least two weeks. Young people under eighteen, as well as persons employed in industries injurious to health, and many categories of office employees, teachers, engineers, technicians and scientific workers get an annual vacation of from one to two months with full pay.

While insuring every citizen of the country the right to rest and leisure by the institution of annual vacations with pay and the introduction of the seven-



Voroshilov Sanatorium of the Red Army at Sochi.



hour day, the Soviet Government has also created all the necessary conditions enabling the working people of the Soviet Union to make the best use of this right.

All the health resorts and sanatoriums in the Soviet Union are the property of the state. Palaces, villas and mansions which formerly belonged to members of the tsar's family, princes, landlords and capitalists, have now been converted into sanatoriums and rest homes for the working people. In addition to these, the Soviet Government has built a large number of new fine health resorts, sanatoriums and rest homes.

Recently I took a rest and cure in Sochi-Macesta—one of the best health resorts in the Caucasus. Here I spent a month in the magnificent sanatorium of the People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry. The sanatorium is situated in a picturesque spot overlooking the Black Sea. Like all the other guests in the sanatorium I had a bright, comfortable and nicely furnished room. I took baths in Macesta, which is

famous all over the world for the excellent health-giving qualities of its waters.

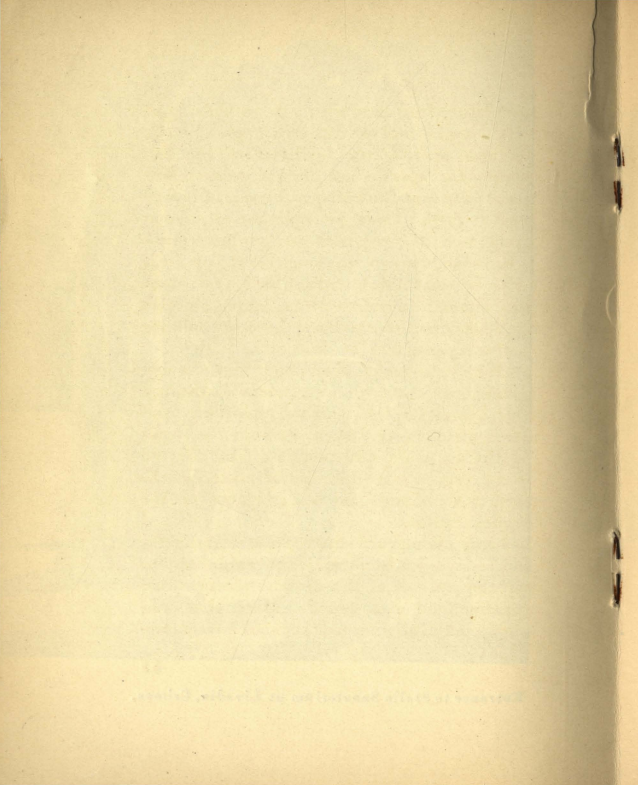
Citizens who are in need of a cure appear before a medical commission which assigns them to the health resorts and sanatoriums best suited to improve their health.

The majority of those who go to health resorts and sanatoriums do so at the expense of the State Social Insurance Fund or their respective trade union funds, as well as of the funds of the factories or institutions in which they are employed.

Citizens who are in no need of special treatment or regime can spend their vacations in rest homes. But here, too, the guests are under the observation of doctors and adhere to a definite daily routine, so as to enable them to derive the greatest possible benefit out of their vacation. The rest homes are also housed in fine buildings—in former villas and palaces or in beautiful new hotels specially built for the purpose by the government. As a rule the rest homes are situated in



Entrance to Stalin Sanatorium at Livadia, Crimea.



beautiful surroundings, in woods, on river banks and at the seashore.

There are various facilities in the rest homes for sports and indoor games. The guests have at their disposal boats, bicycles and so forth. There are frequent excursions conducted by experienced guides. Those who wish can go on long hikes, on boat trips or automobile rides. Each rest home has a good library with a large selection of books. In the evenings there are moving pictures, concerts or lectures.

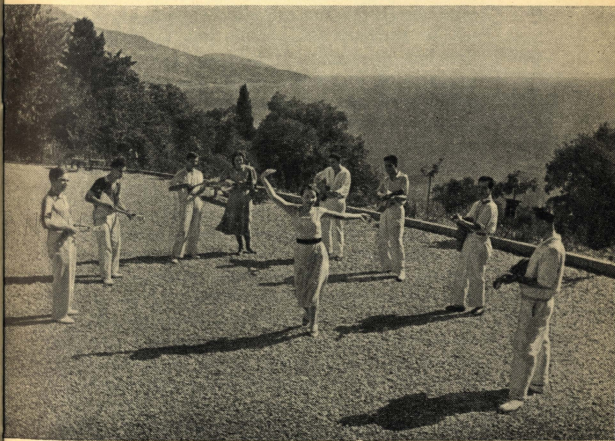
Our Makeyevka iron and steel works alone has several excellently equipped rest homes for the workers and their families, situated in the picturesque environs of the city. In addition, we are allotted every year a large number of places in the best rest homes and sanatoriums of the Soviet Union.

Large sums are appropriated annually by the government and the trade unions for the upkeep of the health resorts, sanatoriums and rest homes. More than one and a half million workers are accommo-

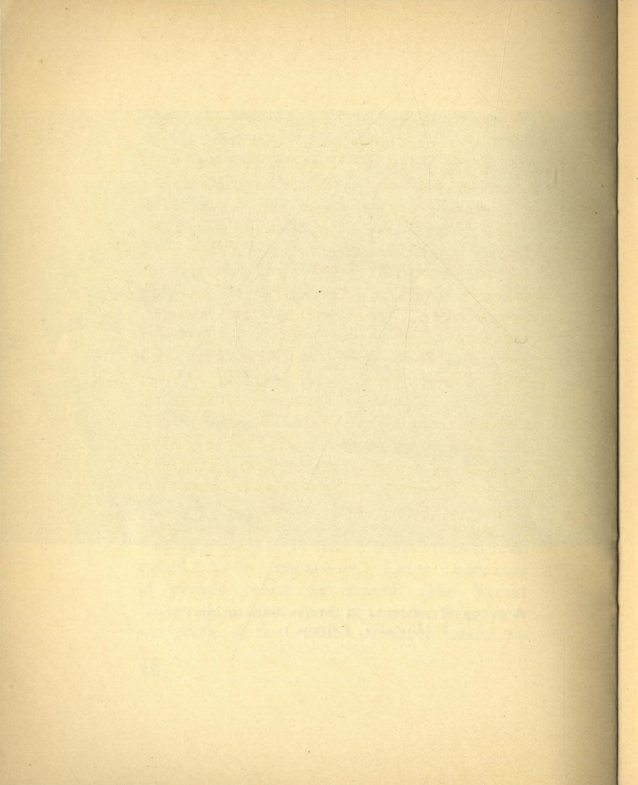
dated during the year in rest homes alone at the expense of the trade unions.

In addition to the rest homes in which people spend their annual vacation, there is a large number of one-day rest homes. Hundreds of thousands of workers and other employees spend their free days in these rest homes, where, freed of all cares, they are served four wholesome and tasty meals a day and provided with a wide choice of facilities for recreation. The visitor to a one-day rest home can join an excursion or go out rowing, or play volleyball or tennis. Many working people come to these rest homes with their families. In 1938 the trade unions alone sent 600,000 of their members to one-day rest homes.

Health resorts, sanatoriums and rest homes are not the only places where the working people of the Soviet Union can spend their vacations. Large numbers of people prefer to travel. The Soviet Union is a vast country, extending over one-sixth of the earth's surface. Lured by



A group of patients at Stalin Sanatorium.
(Livadia, Crimea.)



the severe yet fantastic beauty of the Arctic, by the luxurious and ever-green vegetation of the subtropical districts of the Black Sea coast of the Caucasus and Crimea, by the virgin forests of Siberia, by the stately mountains of the Altai, Tian Shan, Pamir and the Caucasus ranges, by the broad expanses of the Volga, and by the beautiful lakes and cataracts of Karelia, tens of thousands of working people spend their vacation as tourists, traveling and seeing their magnificent country. They travel not only by rail and steamer. Very often they hike or row, or go by bicycle or automobile. Trips on the new canals—the White Sea-Baltic and the Moscow-Volga—have also become very popular in recent years. A fleet of beautifully appointed modern vessels plies the waters of these new canals.

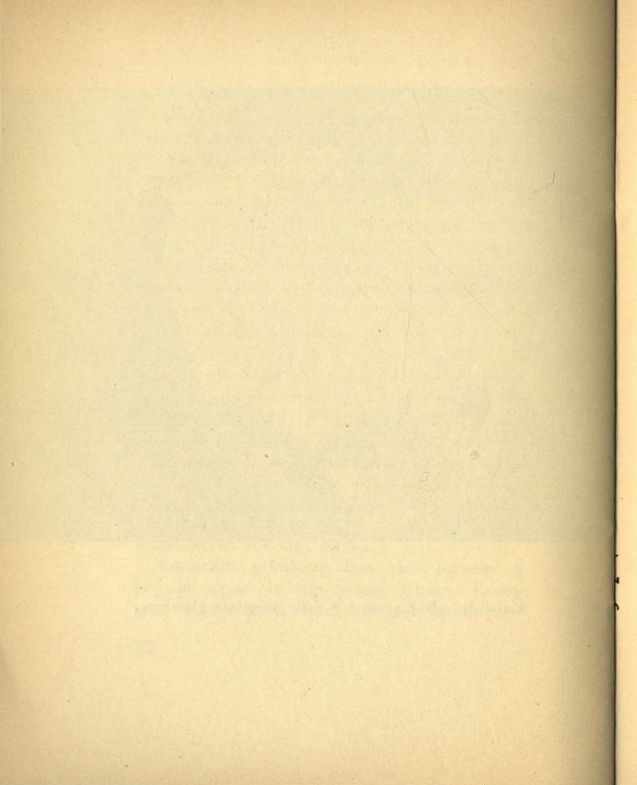
Many spend their vacation visiting new industrial construction sites, hydro-electric stations or newly-built cities and towns. More than 230 such cities and towns have sprung up since the Revolution.

In the old days I saw nothing of the world beyond my own Makeyevka. The farthest trips I made in those times took me about five or ten miles out of the town. While I lived in the Donetz Basin I saw nothing but my own town, the works and the mines in the immediate vicinity. Now-a-days I take a long trip every year. Before the Revolution I never went to Moscow. At present I have rather frequent occasion to visit that city. I go to health resorts. I visited Magnitogorsk—the new great industrial center—where my son worked as director of the iron and steel works. On free days I sit down at the wheel of my own automobile, which was given to me as a premium by the People's Commissar of Heavy Industry, and take my family on trips about a hundred miles outside the city, through picturesque country of whose existence I was ignorant in the old days.

Mountain climbing has also become a popular sport in the Soviet Union. Every year whole tent cities are set up on the



Kabardino-Balkarian A.S.S.R. Mountain climbers.



plateaus and amid the Alpine meadows of the Caucasian and Altai Mountains. In 1937, about 20,000 people took part in various mountain-climbing expeditions. Here is a characteristic detail: From 1829 to 1914 altogether 59 ascents were made to the peak of Mt. Elbrus, the highest mountain in Europe, and of these 47 were by foreigners; whereas in the one year 1935, 2,016 Soviet mountain climbers scaled this peak. In 1938 more than 20,000 people took part in mountain-climbing expeditions.

The Soviet Government does everything to encourage travel as one of the best ways of spending a holiday. It is building many new hotels and camps for tourists, improving transportation and increasing the output of tourist equipment.

Needless to say, the leisure of a Soviet citizen is not confined to his annual vacation. Our workers do not slave at their jobs. After a day's work the Soviet worker does not feel exhausted. He comes home full of vigor and high spirits. He has

enough leisure left, which he can spend in a club, theater, etc. In our city of Makeyevka we have three fine workers' clubs, excellently equipped, with study classes and various amateur art circles. We have a big theater, four moving picture houses and a first-class circus. The former wretched town of Makeyevka bears no resemblance whatever to the present transformed, really cultured and well-kept city. In the old days nobody felt like going out. In the summer the streets were covered with dust, and in the fall and spring the mud was knee-deep. Today the sidewalks and squares are covered with asphalt, the paved streets are lined with many new houses, and there are trees and grass. The small garden which formerly belonged to the director of the works has been extended, improved and turned into a public park. A new fine park—the Northern Park—has been planted. We have now an excellent swimming pool. The sports grounds of the city are always crowded with young people. There is always something going

on on the running tracks, soccer fields, boxing rings, tennis courts, etc.

In 1914 Russia had 222 clubs all told. They were open only to noblemen, merchants, army officers and higher officials. Today there are nearly 96,000 clubs in the Soviet Union, including 65,000 clubs in the countryside.

The collective farmers lead a happy and prosperous life, and like the working people of the cities they want to spend their leisure time in cultured and interesting recreation. The Hammer and Sickle Collective Farm in the Donetz Region, for instance, has built itself a palace of culture with a theater seating 400, a library and reading room, a sound picture installation, rooms for games, etc. The collective farmers' club at the village of Ekaterinodarskaya (Kabardino-Balkarian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic) has a fine auditorium and special rooms for games and various activities, such as an amateur orchestra, a choir, a dramatic circle, a scientific agriculture

circle and the like, as well as a reading room and billiard room. In the village of Shushenskoye, Krasnoyarsk Territory, situated in a remote part of Siberia, where in the 1890's lived V. I. Lenin exiled there by the tsarist government, a great deal of construction has been going on in recent years. A hospital and a club with an installation for sound moving pictures are already functioning. An electric power plant and a large club house are under construction. A monument to Lenin is to be erected in the near future. A health resort for collective farmers has been built in the vicinity of Shushenskoye, on the shores of Tatar Lake.

Moving pictures, theaters and museums enjoy great popularity. Theaters in the Soviet Union always play to full houses. The same applies to moving picture theaters. Their number has been constantly increasing. Thus, in 1914 there were 153 theaters and 1,412 moving picture houses in Russia; whereas in the Soviet Union at the beginning of 1939 there were 790

theaters and more than 30,000 moving picture houses, including about 19,000 in villages. Collective farm theaters have also sprung up. In 1937 their number reached 207. Children's theaters exist in many cities.

The Soviet Government has opened up numerous parks of culture and rest providing a variety of entertainment and recreation for their visitors. Here the visitor finds sports grounds and whole stadiums, swimming pools, games, theaters, moving pictures, dance halls, various amusements, reading rooms, exhibitions, etc. The parks are particularly frequented on free days. Working people come here with their families and spend the whole day, while their children are taken care of in special "children's towns" run under the supervision of experienced educators. In the winter the parks of culture and rest offer facilities for skiing, skating, tobogganing, etc. Most of the cities and many villages in the Soviet Union now have their parks of culture and rest.

Before the Revolution, sports were the pastime of the aristocracy and the rich. The workers, exhausted with toil and subsisting on semi-starvation wages, had neither the strength nor the means to engage in sports. No wonder therefore that in 1913 there were not more than twenty athletic clubs in the whole of Russia. It is only since the Revolution that sports and athletics have become a popular pastime of the masses.

At present there are more than 30,000 athletic clubs and sports circles in the Soviet Union, many of them in villages.

More than 10,000,000 people in the Soviet Union now engage regularly in sports and athletics. They have at their disposal 650 stadiums, 7,200 specially equipped sports grounds, a hundred houses of physical culture, 350 aquatic sports stations and 2,700 skiing stations. Athletics and sports are increasingly encouraged by the government and the trade unions.

The right of citizens of the Soviet Union to rest and leisure is incorporated in Ar-

Article 119 of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R., which states:

“Citizens of the U.S.S.R. have the right to rest and leisure.

“The right to rest and leisure is ensured by the reduction of the working day to seven hours for the overwhelming majority of the workers, the institution of annual vacations with full pay for workers and employees and the provision of a wide network of sanatoria, rest homes and clubs for the accommodation of the working people.”

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