



DISSIDENTS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

Gathering Information

One important activity conducted by dissidents was documenting the government's persecution of fellow dissidents, religious believers, ethnic minorities, and other groups, a practice that was both difficult and dangerous. The information was difficult to obtain because political trials were held behind closed doors, political prisoners were isolated during their interrogation and imprisonment, and political exiles were sent to some of the most remote parts of the Soviet Union, where contacts with the outside were strictly controlled. In 1979, Soviet human rights activist Yuri Yarim-Agaev, traveling on behalf of the Moscow Helsinki Group, visited exiled dissidents in locations throughout Siberia and the far eastern reaches of the Soviet Union. His subsequent observations, reports, and photographs were distributed to human rights organizations around the world.