



**a  
family torn  
apart**



# **A FAMILY TORN APART**

**Compiled by  
Dr. Nina Strokata**

**Member of the  
Ukrainian Helsinki Group  
and  
former Soviet political prisoner**

**Human Rights Commission  
World Congress of Free Ukrainians**

**Toronto, Canada  
1981**

*"...both Petro Sichko and I are former political prisoners of Stalin's concentration camps. Our guilt lay in having been born in the western parts of Ukraine, which belonged to the Polish Rzeczpospolita. Our fate is part of the fate of stateless Ukraine, the fate of its defenceless descendants, who, in times of great imperialist upheavals and struggles on its territory, are forced to come out in defence of human rights, organically bound up with the sovereign national rights of our perpetually subjugated homeland."*

*From a letter by Stefaniya Sichko*

*"...the fate of the Sichko family is an open wound in the general tragedy of our nation. Therefore the World Congress of Free Ukrainians considers it an honour to proclaim the Sichkos the Family of the Year and appeals to everyone to come to their defence."*

*From the Resolutions of the XV Plenary Session of the  
WCFU Secretariat, June, 1981*

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## FOREWORD

*The summer of 1979 was a troubled one in Ukraine. News spread from Lviv of the violent death of the beloved composer Volodymyr Ivasiuk. Day after day Ukrainians went to his grave with the feeling that another injustice had been inflicted on the Ukrainian people. The Lychakivsky Cemetery in Lviv, where the murdered composer was buried, was especially crowded on the traditional Pentecost festival of that year. The mass media had circulated a report that Ivasiuk was mentally ill and had committed suicide. The Christian population of Ukraine sought inner strength to survive the loss, yet could not find the strength to bear the outrage and insult. In defence of the one who had died and could no longer defend himself, Vasyl Sichko, the youngest member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, spoke out. Vasyl stood over the grave holding a red carnation, whose colour seemed a reminder of the people's bloody losses. The young man denied the report which was offensive to the memory of one who had died tragically. And then the father, Petro Sichko, who was standing beside his son, added, addressing those present: "It is impossible to deprive our people of customs which are intimately linked with religious festivals." And the father also reminded everyone that he and his son Vasyl were both members of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group. Made wise by their experience during the Stalinist and post-Stalinist repressions, the people, deeply moved, took both father and son under their protection and escorted them home. But they were powerless against the slander of the press and official repression. On July 5, 1979, after several misleading articles had appeared in the local press, Vasyl and Petro Sichko were arrested. And in December, 1979, each of them was sentenced to three years of imprisonment. The youngest Sichko son, Volodymyr, was at this time a student at the University of Kiev. Together with his mother and sister, Volodymyr went for a meeting with his father and brother (one such meeting is allowed after a trial).*

*This meeting became a decisive one for Volodymyr, as he refused to condemn the actions of his father and brother. He was expelled from the university. Volodymyr undertook protest action and became a prisoner in his turn in 1981. He was sentenced to three years of imprisonment.*

*Disturbed by the fate of the Sichko family members, who do not intend to renounce their sentenced kin, we are presenting information which can be used in defence of this courageous Ukrainian family.*

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**BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS  
ABOUT  
THE SICHKO FAMILY**

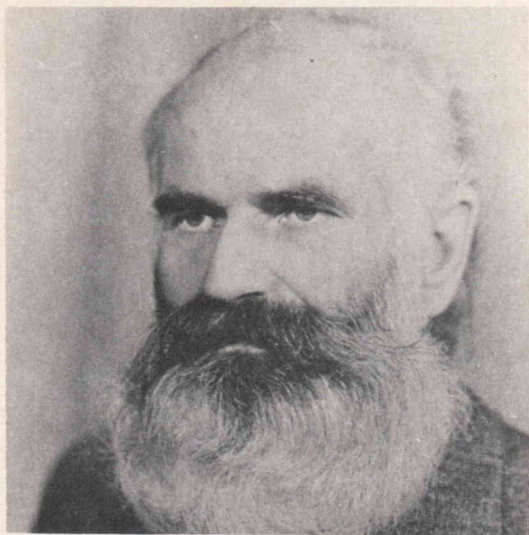








## PETRO VASYLYOVYCH SICHKO



Father. Born August 18, 1926. First arrested in 1947 and sentenced to death for involvement in the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) and in an underground student group at the University of Chernivtsi. The sentence of death was commuted to 25 years' imprisonment. During the mass review of political prisoners' cases, this term was shortened to 10 years. According to Petro Sichko's own testimony, the KGB proposed that he work for them in 1975, promising that in return his children would be allowed to study at university. By refusing to collaborate with the all-powerful KGB, Petro Sichko doomed his children to persecution.

In 1977, Petro Sichko became a member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group. In 1978 he began to seek permission to emigrate from the USSR, and in 1979 renounced his Soviet citizenship.

See the appropriate chapters for details of his arrest in 1979 and the ensuing trial.

Sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

The address of the concentration camp where he is serving his term is:

Ukrainian SSR

Bryanka — 6, Voroshylovhrad obl.

ust. UL — 314/11-3

Postal Address: Moskva, p/ya 5110/-UL.

**STEFANIYA VASYLIVNA PETRASH-SICHKO**



Wife of Petro Sichko. Born April 1, 1925. Imprisoned for ten years at the same time as Petro Sichko. Married him while incarcerated. Their first son, Vasyl, was born in the camps.

On February 5, 1980, the Dolyna regional KGB (Ivano-Frankivsk Province) issued a directive forbidding Stefaniya to meet or socialize with members of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group.

Her home address:

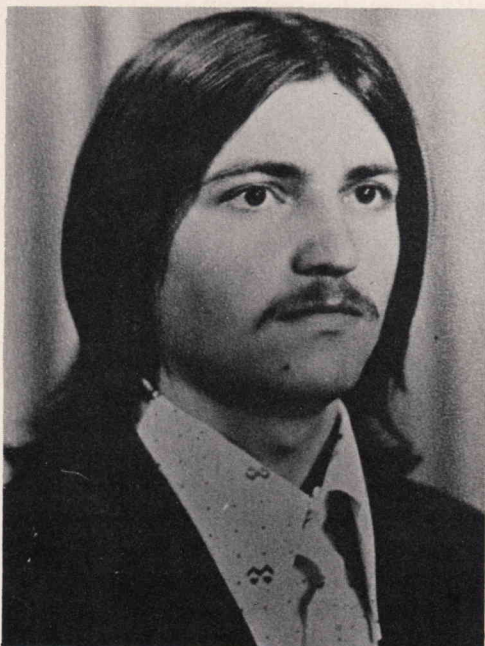
Ukrainian SSR — 285600

Dolyna, Ivano-Frankivsk obl.

vul. P. Myrnoho, 14



## VASYL PETROVYCH SICHKO



The elder son of Petro and Stefaniya Sichko. Born December 22, 1956, while his parents were still incarcerated in the post-Stalinist camps. Vasyl was a student of journalism at the Kiev State University. The KGB tried to persuade him to collaborate with them. For his refusal to do so, he became the object of continuous persecution: he was groundlessly expelled from the university (1977) and groundlessly forced into a psychiatric hospital (1978, 1979).

In 1977, he became a member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, together with his father. In the same year he renounced Soviet citizenship.

For information about his arrest and the ensuing trial see the appropriate chapters.

Sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

The address of the concentration camp where he is being held is:

Cherkasy — 4, ust. Ech — 325/62-52

Postal Address: Moskva, p/ya 5110/1 — Ech

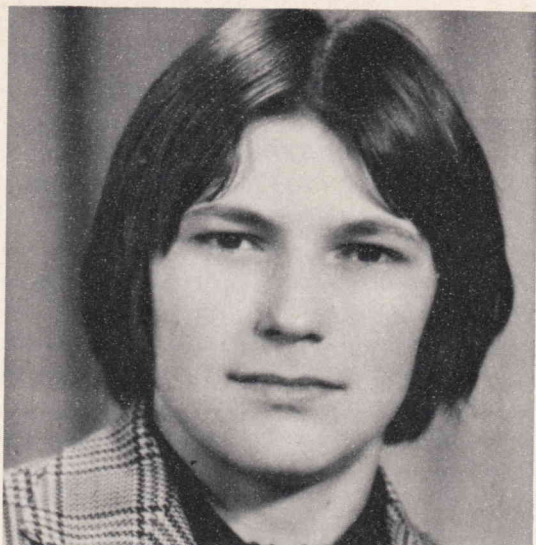


**OKSANA PETRIVNA SICHKO**



Daughter of Petro and Stefaniya Sichko. Born April 10, 1964.  
Upon finishing school denied the right to a higher education.  
At present working on a collective farm.  
Home Address: see mother's address.

## VOLODYMYR PETROVYCH SICHKO



Younger son of Petro and Stefaniya Sichko. Born July 26, 1960. Volodymyr was a student in the Department of Mathematical and Mechanical Studies at the Kiev State University. The KGB tried to persuade him to collaborate with them, demanding first that he condemn his father's views and denounce him. After the trial of his father and brother, there began a campaign of harassment and preparation for Volodymyr's expulsion from university.

The lecturers and the Dean did not conceal from the other students that he was expelled from the university, because members of his family had been convicted of political crimes. In such an instance, collaboration with the KGB could have meant salvation, but Volodymyr, like his older brother and father before him, renounced his Soviet citizenship.

Finding himself out of university, Volodymyr was obliged to do service in the Soviet army. However, not considering himself a Soviet citizen, he refused to serve and sought permission to emigrate from the USSR. Volodymyr appealed to the students of the free world to help him and his brother continue their studies outside the USSR.

See the appropriate chapters for information about his arrest and trial in 1980.

Volodymyr was sentenced to three years' imprisonment. He is the youngest Ukrainian political prisoner today.

## **STEFANIYA PETRASH-SICHKO'S APPEAL "TO PEOPLE OF GOOD WILL OF THE WORLD", 9.1.1981**

I am the mother of three children: two sons, Vasyl and Volodymyr, aged 24 and 20 years, and a daughter, Oksana, 17 years old.

My children are the only blissful reward of our luckless life with my husband, Petro Sichko, at present imprisoned, together with my son Vasyl, for his human-rights activity and membership in the Ukrainian Group to Promote the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords.

Now a terrible punishment has befallen my children. Is anyone able to prevent and avert this punitive hand? In desperation I am addressing my story to everyone capable of hearing and helping me.

Both Petro Sichko and I are former political prisoners of Stalinist concentration camps. I was sentenced in 1947 to 10 years' imprisonment, and Petro Sichko, in the same year, to death, the sentence being commuted to 25 years, and later shortened to 10 years. What did we do, why such a punishment? Our guilt lay in having been born in Western Ukraine, which belonged to the Polish Rzeczpospolita.

Our fate is part of the fate of stateless Ukraine, the fate of its defenceless descendants, who, in times of great imperialist upheavals and struggles on its territory, are forced to come out in defence of human rights, organically bound up with the sovereign national rights of our perpetually subjugated homeland.

Thanks to God's mercy we survived this, lived through the terrible hard times of dictatorship, mass terror directed toward the physical and spiritual genocide of our people. And, while imprisoned there, we married. And in 1958 we returned from distant Kolyma to our native land, to Dolyna in Ivano-Frankivsk Province, to start a new life. With me I had an infant, Vasyl, and hopes of a good and happy future.

We lived a harmonious married life, worked hard and studied

together, and brought up our children. We never stopped believing in the triumph of good, even though we lived in utter poverty for more than fifteen years.

This lasted until 1977, until the day our son, Vasyl Sichko, was expelled from his second year in journalism at Kiev State University. When Vasyl enrolled at the University in 1975, his father was made an offer to secretly collaborate with the KGB. Upon refusing, he was threatened with: "Your son won't be studying at university for long!" And so it happened...

Then father and son became involved in the noble, open and loyal human-rights activity of the Ukrainian Group to Promote the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords. I also consider myself a sympathizer of this organization.

In July, 1979, they were arrested, and in December were sentenced by a closed court to three years' imprisonment.

A year later, the second son was also arrested for not wishing to renounce his father and older brother. Like them, he had renounced his Soviet citizenship. On January 9, 1981, he too was sentenced to three years' imprisonment.





**1978**

**BEGINNING OF PERSECUTION  
FOR REFUSAL TO  
COLLABORATE  
WITH THE KGB**



**STEFANIYA PETRASH-SICHKO ON THE PERSECUTION  
OF HER SON VASYL BY PUNITIVE PSYCHIATRY**

*(From an appeal of 24.7.1978 to the Lviv Provincial Forensic  
Psychiatry Commission)*

At the beginning of August of this year, my son, Vasyl Sichko, born in 1957, will come before the Forensic Psychiatry Commission to establish his mental state.

My son, Vasyl, was referred to you by the Lviv provincial procurator's office as "suspected of committing a crime" because he expressed his thoughts aloud, which, however, brought no harm at all to society.

As a mother, I can say with complete certainty that my son Vasyl has never in any way suffered any mental or physical illnesses. I have never noticed in him any deviation from the norm in behaviour, appetite, or sleeping habits. I have never seen him in a depressive state. The whole time he was in school my son studied very successfully and finished with excellent and good marks. Having obtained an excellent grade on his entrance exam to the University of Kiev, he was an active and capable student for two years in the Department of Journalism. He reads widely and has his own library of over 2,000 books.

My husband and I were repressed in the post-war years, and at the time our eldest son entered the Kiev State University, the organs of the KGB tried to make my husband his own informer, in return for which our son Vasyl could obtain a higher education without any hindrance.

When my husband, Petro Sichko, declined this disgusting proposition, my son began to be persecuted, and upon completion of the second year of his course he was expelled from the university.

From us, his parents, my son Vasyl knew about our past, the injustices inflicted upon us by the Polish and German authorities, as well as the fact that we unjustly wasted away in Soviet concentration camps. He wrote complaints to various competent institutions and personally went to the Central Committee of the CPSU for a meeting

to discuss the problem of his resumption of studies at the university. When his efforts brought no results and his rights as a citizen of the USSR were ignored, my son renounced his Soviet citizenship and applied for permission to travel abroad so that he might complete his studies. It was this which the KGB used as grounds for fabricating a diagnosis of "schizophrenia".

If one considers the reasons which prompted my son to take such action, then on the basis of sober human logic these actions completely correspond to the actions of a sane person. However, this logic was crushed and the following began:

In early November 1977, after my son's expulsion from university, the militia came to our building when we were not at home and circulated a false rumor among the neighbours that my son, Vasyl Sichko, was insane and intended to burn himself on Khreshchatyk in Kiev during the parade in commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the October Revolution. And they had come instead of the doctors to avert the misfortune. Hearing such things from our neighbours, we were utterly outraged, and our surprised son joked: "Let them burn themselves. Though my life isn't an easy one, I still haven't tired of it."

However, the KGB did not stop at this, and on January 17, 1978, my absolutely healthy son was forcibly dragged by the militia into a car and conveyed to the psychiatric hospital in Ivano-Frankivsk.

The following day, on 18.1.78, I asked the Dolyna psychiatrist, Doctor Obukhova, whether she had ever seen my son. She replied that she had not. Then I asked her what right she had to direct my son to a psychiatric hospital. At this Dr. Obukhova burst into tears and replied: "Dear woman, I know that an irreparable wrong has been done, but I was forced to give your son such a diagnosis so that he could be accepted into a psychiatric hospital. I put down "suspected schizophrenia," and that this was not a diagnosis, only a referral. I'm not to blame." And later this doctor confessed in front of her fellow workers that she had "committed a sin, for she had referred a mentally healthy boy to a psychiatric hospital."

After two weeks of forced and needless detainment in the Ivano-Frankivsk Psychiatric Hospital, the commission discharged my son home. I immediately contacted the deputy of the chief doctor of this hospital and asked: "What abnormal things did you detect in my son?" The doctor replied: "The fact that a normal person could not renounce his Soviet citizenship, and that this is the Soviet Union, not

America: here the paths are well worn and we move along them. And, finally, your son, Vasyl Sichko, was referred here by the Dolyna psychiatrist with a diagnosis already made.”

Seeing that my son had been cruelly mocked, I turned to the head of the commission, Professor Burdeynyi, with the words: “What have you pinned on my son?” He replied that I would be informed of the commission’s decision by the person who had referred him there. Soon afterward, the procurator of the Dolyna region, Yerlykin, informed us that my son was suffering from schizophrenia. From this it is evident that my son’s diagnosis had been fabricated in advance by the organs of the KGB, and the doctors had merely rubber-stamped it.

In as much as my son Vasyl Sichko is a normal person, let him answer for his actions before a court of law.

I would like to believe that the Lviv Provincial Forensic Psychiatry Commission will make an objective decision and will not allow the misuse of medicine for political purposes.

Please inform me of the day of sitting of the forensic commission in the matter of my son at the following address:

Ivano-Frankivsk Province  
m. Dolyna  
vul. P. Myrnoho, 14

*Compiler's note:*

*The mother did not receive a reply from the doctors.*





1979

**ESCALATION OF PERSECUTION  
FOR ACTIONS CONNECTED  
WITH MEMBERSHIP IN  
THE UKRAINIAN HELSINKI GROUP**

*“...As a member of the Helsinki Group,  
I appeal to you to clear your conscience.  
For you told me yourselves that  
you have no pretensions whatsoever toward  
your former colleague Striltsiv,  
and are being coerced by the KGB.”*

*From Petro Sichko's address to the witnesses  
in the court proceedings against a member of the  
Ukrainian Helsinki Group, Vasyl Striltsiv,  
on 9.1.1979*



**STEFANIYA PETRASH-SICHKO ON THE  
ARREST OF HER HUSBAND AND SON VASYL**

*(From an appeal to the Lviv provincial procurator, Antonenko.  
6. VII/10. VII. 1979)*

On July 5, 1979, members of the Lviv provincial procurator's office and the Dolyna section of the MVD in Ivano-Frankivsk Province arrested my husband, Petro Sichko, and my son, Vasył Sichko, with your sanction.

The formal pretext for their imprisonment was their address to a gathering of people in Lviv's Lychakivskyi Cemetery at the grave of the talented Ukrainian composer Volodymyr Ivasiuk.

And yet the real reason for the arrest was my husband's and son's decisive refusal to acknowledge the right to the KGB to control people's destinies at will. Through the fault of this organ, my husband, a qualified economist and planner, was dismissed from work on several occasions, and my son was expelled from university. Such lawlessness on the part of the KGB and the silent acceptance of all this by the competent organs has led to my husband's and son's renouncing their Soviet citizenship and applying to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR for permission to emigrate with their family. When the authorities ignored the declaration, my husband and son joined the Ukrainian Group to Promote the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords.

**STEFANIYA PETRASH-SICHKO ON THE  
ARREST OF HER HUSBAND AND SON VASYL**  
*(From the text of a protest to L. Brezhnev, 18. VII. 1979)*

On July 5, 1979, the Lviv provincial procurator's office arrested my son Vasyi Sichko, and my husband, Petro Sichko, my son being taken away without any sanction for this from a competent department.

On July 10 of this year I was informed by the provincial procurator's assistant, Ivanov V.V., that my husband was imprisoned in the KGB's solitary confinement interrogation cell at #1 Myr Street in Lviv, and my completely healthy son was arrested and confined to the psychiatric hospital in the same city. Knowing of countless examples of forced "cures" of mentally healthy people, as a mother I protest with all my being against this horrid criminality to which my son has now fallen prey.

I demand an immediate meeting with my husband and son to satisfy myself that they are alive. After all, they were arrested for taking part in a peaceful mass protest against the mysterious death of the famous Ukrainian composer Volodymyr Ivasiuk. Why have they decided to punish my innocent husband and son instead of exposing and punishing the real criminals, whom the people have unanimously condemned...?!



## **NINA STROKATA ON THE TRIAL OF THE SICHKO FATHER AND THE OLDER SICHKO SON**

While in custody during the pre-trial inquest, Vasyl Sichko ignored all inquest procedures, considering his arrest groundless and pointing out his renunciation of Soviet citizenship. Vasyl was taken for interrogation by force and chained up. During the preliminary inquest father and son were kept in separate cells, located across the passage from each other.

The judicial inquiry began on 4.12.1979 in the Lviv Provincial Court (see notes for composition of court). As a sign of protest against their groundless arrest and accusations of illegal actions, father and son refused to stand up when the traditional "The court is in session" was read out. Guards picked up each of the accused by the arms and held up their limp bodies until the members of the court had taken their seats.

Petro and Vasyl Sichko were accused under Art. 187 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine. Article 187 covers punishment for slander against the Soviet state and social order.

The accusations against Petro Sichko: an address at the grave of murdered Ukrainian composer Volodymyr Ivasiuk; a protest against the arrest of a founding member of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, writer Oles Berdnyk; a protest against the actions of the KGB in the case of Mykhailo Melnyk, who was a correspondent of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group and who, as a result of repressions, committed suicide.

The accusations against Vasyl Sichko: an address at the grave of Volodymyr Ivasiuk and a handwritten collection of his poems written in one copy, which no one had seen except for the author.

Both the accused boycotted the trial, just as they had boycotted the pre-trial inquest. Both declared that their boycott was an act of solidarity with all the sentenced members of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group. Their declaration of a trial boycott and refusal of their appointed lawyers was all the father and son said in the closed trial.

Petro Sichko also yelled out “Shame!” to the students from the Kiev State University who were bearing false witness at the KGB’s insistence. After this remark he was handcuffed by the guards and led out of the courtroom.

A consultant (name unknown) from the Lviv Psychiatric Hospital was summoned to the court and, despite the previous diagnoses, testified that Vasyl Sichko was mentally healthy and had never been mentally ill.

Stefaniya Sichko, the wife and mother of the accused, was not notified of the date of the trial.

The court’s verdict for Petro Sichko: 3 years’ imprisonment in a strict-regime camp.

The court’s verdict for Vasyl Sichko: 3 years’ imprisonment in a strict-regime camp.

Neither of the accused made any final statements. When the father wanted to say good-bye to his son, both their arms were twisted and handcuffed.

On the 10.12.1979, the anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, both the accused received copies of their sentences in their cells. Neither father nor son signed these texts, and both refused to appeal the sentence.

## **PETRO SICHKO FROM HIS PRISON CELL ABOUT THE DEATH OF VOLODYMYR IVASIUK**

*(From the Information Bulletin of the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, No. 1, 1980)*

“In the name of members of all Helsinki Groups, with my own honour and that of my son, Vasyl Sichko, I would like to clear Ivasiuk Volodymyr of the aspersion that he was mentally ill and therefore hanged himself. I declare that Ivasiuk was killed...”  
18.VII.1979

*Compiler’s note:*

*It is still unknown to whom Petro Sichko addressed this declaration, made while he was imprisoned during the pre-trial inquest.*

**1980**

**THE WHOLE  
SICHKO FAMILY  
IS BEING PERSECUTED**



## **VOLODYMYR SICHKO'S DECLARATION OF THE RENUNCIATION OF HIS SOVIET CITIZENSHIP. 21.10.1980**

I, Volodymyr Petrovych Sichko, born in 1960, a Ukrainian, a former student of the Shevchenko State University in Kiev, do hereby renounce my Soviet citizenship in connection with my illegal expulsion from the University (order no. 192 of March 21, 1980) and demand the right to emigrate to the USA for the purpose of obtaining a higher education in that country.

The declaration of my illegal expulsion from the Kiev State University is supported by the following facts:

In 1977 I enrolled as a student in the Department of Mechanical and Mathematical Studies at the Shevchenko State University in Kiev. For two years my studies proceeded quite peacefully, one might say, except for one instance when I was summoned to see the head of the Department of Military Science at the University, where an employee of the KGB proposed that I keep watch on the activities of my father, Petro Sichko, and my brother, Vasyl, and report these back to the KGB. This I refused to do. Then it was suggested that I keep a watch on the activities of other people. Again I refused. The KGB employee then told me that my refusal would affect my future at the University. I was shocked and indignant.

In December 1979 my father Petro and my brother Vasyl (my brother was also a student at the University and was expelled on the same grounds as I — 'poor academic achievement') stood trial because of their human-rights activities and their involvement in the Ukrainian Public Group to Promote the Implementation of the Helsinki Accords. Immediately I felt the pressure on me. After the trial, with the permission of the Military Science Department, I went home to visit for a day. However, I explained this misunderstanding. Then the winter session began, and I was not admitted. The reason was that my credits in Military Preparation were not entered into the records of the Department of Military Science.



The reason for this formal obstacle was to hinder me in my preparation for the examinations. I had to spend almost the whole semester obtaining credits which I had already received. At the end of the semester I was intentionally failed, even though I was well prepared for the examinations. I received a '2' (a failing grade) in three of the subjects, and before the exam in Functional Analysis, Assistant Professor Panasovych told me straight out to gather my belongings and go home, to stop wasting their time. How can one expect a good grade after such remarks?

That is exactly what happened. He barely paid any attention to me, playing chess with another colleague the whole time, and at the end announced that I had received a '2'. Everyone is allowed to appear a second time before the examining commission, but I was not given such an opportunity, even though in my two and one-half years there I had never received failing grades nor been placed on academic probation.

When my fellow students heard that I was to be expelled, they tried to defend me, but their efforts were in vain. Dean Zavalo would not even talk to them about the matter. The Dean allowed only the Komsorg (the Komsomol organizer) to remain behind in his office and intimated to him that I was expelled not for poor grades, but because of my father and brother. And yet the Constitution states that children are not responsible for the deeds of their parents. Why then should I be responsible? This became evident when an employee of the Ivano-Frankivsk KGB, Medvedyev, in a conversation with my mother on February 5, 1980, told her that it was inconvenient for the state to educate an enemy. When my mother disagreed, saying: "And what sins has my son committed against you?", he replied that a mother such as she could not have good children.

From the above facts you can see how Soviet laws are put into practice.

Because our whole family and I have suffered so much injustice at the hands of the Soviet organs, I am renouncing my Soviet citizenship, and because I have been subjected to so much duplicity from the Department of Military Science, I refuse to serve in the ranks of the Red Army.

## **VOLODYMYR SICHKO'S APPEAL TO THE STUDENTS OF THE WORLD**

I appeal to students in the United States, as well as to students throughout the world, to hear me and to help my brother and me finish our studies.

My brother, Vasyl Sichko, born in 1956, began his studies in journalism at the Kiev State University in 1975, and I enrolled in the same University in 1977 in the Department of Mechanical and Mathematical Studies. Both my brother Vasyl and I were good students, but because our parents had been political prisoners in Stalinist concentration camps, my brother Vasyl was expelled after two years of studies at the University, and half-way through my third year there I was expelled too, supposedly for "poor academic grades."

Not only are we prevented from studying in this "democratic" Soviet country, but we are also prevented from living a normal life here. After two years of cruel treatment in psychiatric hospitals, my brother Vasyl was arrested and sentenced under Art. 178/1 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code to three years' imprisonment in hard labour camps. He loves to read, but when he entered the meagre camp library and wanted to select a book, the librarian said: "Take the first book that comes to hand: these aren't potatoes to be picked and chosen." He is also depressed by the environment in which he finds himself. The people are a drunken, demoralized mass. These are camps for common criminals. Moreover, he does hard labour out in the rain, and this is undermining his health. Receipt of packages is completely forbidden until a prisoner has served half his term.

With regard to my expulsion from the University, I have appealed to the Ministry of Higher and Special Secondary Education, asking them to look into this illegal act and to reinstate me as a student, but they have a standard reply: "The case has been examined and it has been ascertained that the expulsion was lawful."

After this I appealed to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of

the Ukrainian SSR and received an identical reply. I was expecting a miracle, but it did not happen, and so, as a sign of protest, I renounced my Soviet citizenship on September 21, 1980, and sought permission to emigrate to the USA to continue my studies there. I sent the renunciation to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Ukrainian SSR, and also refused to serve in the Red Army.

There is no mercy in this country and now I am waiting from day to day to be arrested. This means a life of endless distress.

After my expulsion from the University, my fellow students could not reconcile themselves to the fact that I would no longer be able to continue my studies, and sent a telegram to L. Brezhnev, asking him to intercede in this illegal expulsion. The Kiev Department of Communication returned the telegram to the Dean's office, since such telegrams could not be transmitted. The Dean rounded up the students to find those responsible, and explained to them that Sichko was expelled not for his poor grades, but because his parents were nationalists and his father and brother were in prison. Also, while talking to the boy's mother, he had noticed nationalist tendencies in her as well. So there was no need for indignation that Sichko had been expelled illegally.

As you can see, in our country no one abides by the rules of the Constitution; instead, people act according to secret rules. And anyone attempting to draw to the attention of those in power to the violations of the fundamental laws is regarded as an enemy of the state and put on trial.

I am only twenty years old. I very much want to study. I hope the students of the world will react to my appeal and help my brother and me to continue our studies.

*Compiler's note:*

*The document was received undated.*

**1981**

**EPILOGUE OF  
PERSECUTION AFTER  
REFUSAL TO COLLABORATE  
WITH THE KGB**





**FINAL STATEMENT OF  
VOLODYMYR SICHKO AT HIS TRIAL,  
JANUARY 9, 1981**

I shall speak, although I do not acknowledge the Soviet court presiding over me, for more than three months ago I renounced my citizenship of this country, which at my twenty years of age deprived me of my human-rights, expelling me for no reason at all from the third year of a Mechanical and Mathematical Studies course at the Kiev Shevchenko State University. I was expelled from the University for one reason only, because I was the son of my father. After my expulsion I took up a course in driving at the Dolyna Automobile Plant. Here again I was not allowed to sit for my driver's licence, merely because I was a Sichko. So I was even denied the right to a driver's licence. The only right left to me was service in the ranks of the Red Army. And I do not acknowledge this right.

Back on September 21, 1980, in protest against all the unjust treatment I had received, I renounced my Soviet citizenship and refused to serve in the ranks of the Red Army. The reason I refused to serve was that my expulsion from the University was initiated by the Department of Military Science, which acted in such a way as to prevent me from sitting for examinations in the winter session of 1980. When my fellow students became enraged at such insolent treatment, and sent L. Brezhnev a telegram in which they wrote of my illegal expulsion, the Kiev Telegraph Service withdrew the telegram, thus violating Soviet law, and delivered it to the Dean's office. After this the Dean was simply forced to explain to my fellow students that I had been expelled not because of an unsatisfactory academic record, as stated officially in the order no. 192 of March 21, 1980, but because my father, Petro Sichko, and my brother Vasyl were nationalists and convicted men.

This was a violation of the clause of the Soviet Constitution which states that children are not responsible for their parents' deeds. Never in my life have I done anything to violate Soviet law, but these

laws are being violated by you and those like you. I am a person, not a slave as you have become accustomed to think, and I have the right to be enraged at your lawlessness.

This mockery was not enough for you, it was not enough that you had spat into my soul; you still demanded that I spit into my own soul, that I disown my father's views in writing, and that would be tantamount to renouncing my own father, who brought me up and taught me to view the world with open eyes. Hypocrites, you should renounce your own parents for having raised you to be so stale and indifferent to human suffering.

I admit no guilt, and my reason for not going into the army is your evil actions against me. I will enter the army only as an officer after completing University — there can be no other condition.

I declare that I am not a slave nor a Soviet citizen, and you have no right to try me in a court of law, for in accordance with the Final Act of the Helsinki Accords, every person has the right to chose his citizenship and the country he would like to live in. In my renunciation of Soviet citizenship, I asked to emigrate to the USA to continue my studies.

*Compiler's note:*

*The trial took place in the town of Dolyna,  
Ivano-Frankivsk Province.*

**EXCERPT FROM THE COMPLAINT BY  
STEFANIYA SICHKO TO THE SUPREME COURT  
OF THE USSR AND THE UKRAINIAN SSR  
11.1.1981**

On December 6, 1980, the office of the Dolyna district procurator, under pressure from the KGB, arrested my son, Volodymyr Sichko, and indicted him under Art. 72 of the Criminal Code of the Ukrainian SSR.

My son Volodymyr finished his secondary education in the town of Dolyna back in 1977. That year he enrolled in the Kiev State University in the Department of Mechanical and Mathematical Studies. For two years he studied in peace, but when he was in his third year his father, Petro Sichko, and his brother, Vasyl, were arrested at home and convicted on December 4, 1979, under Art. 187/1 of the Criminal Code, and on December 17 of that year my son received permission from the Department of Military Science for a day's visit home. On that day all of us, that is, I, my daughter, and my son, went to Lviv to say farewell to our father and brother. My son paid for this visit with his university studies. He was expelled — the Department of Military Science made sure of that. I am singling out the Department of Military Science, because it was they who were instrumental in bringing my son into the courtroom, for because of their ignoble activities against my son, he refused to serve in the Red Army.

Both the examiner for the procurator's office, the KGB, and the judge accused my son of violating an article of the Constitution, punishable under Article 72. But article 224 of the Criminal Code, Section 5, states that besides the information mentioned in that article, the indictment should also contain information on the disclosure of the causes and conditions contributing to the crime, with a note on the measures taken by the organs and the investigators to remove these causes and conditions.

Exactly in accordance with this abovementioned Article 224,

measures should have been taken, that is, a postponement should have been granted, thus setting the conditions for his resumption of studies at University, and thereby circumventing Article 72 (Article 72 of the Criminal Code provides for conviction for refusing to undertake military service, which is compulsory in the USSR).

Why not give an opportunity to learn to those who strive to learn? His expulsion order was supposedly for "poor academic achievement", but when his fellow-students became incensed and sent a telegram to L.I. Brezhnev (which the post office returned to the Dean's office), Dean Zavalo was forced to admit to the students that Volodymyr Sichko was expelled not for poor grades, but because his father and brother were nationalists and were in prison.

And again I want to point out that no one made the Dean answerable for having falsified the order, nor for having violated an article of the Constitution which states that children are not answerable for their parents.

I am not a lawyer, only a mother, but I can see that if every case was treated the same way as my son's case, superficially, by grabbing at Article 72 without regard to any other extenuating articles, then more people than necessary could be tried...

I have described the reason for my son's arrest, and now want to describe the trial itself.

When my son was arrested on December 6, 1980, the examiner for the procurator's office sent for me that same day and questioned me as a witness. After this I was summoned many more times by the KGB on this pretext. If I was going to be a witness, I believed I would be notified of the trial. Besides this, I went every day to find out the date of the trial. On January 7 the case was in court, but I was told that it was not. When I went there on January 8, the secretary told me that a trial date had yet to be set. On January 9, I again went to the courthouse, but this time in the afternoon, at about four o'clock. I had to wait for a long time in the reception room, because the secretary was in the judges' office entertaining them with funny stories which were making them guffaw.

When she finally appeared, I asked when my son's trial would take place. She blushed and started to run from office to office (asking her seniors what lies to tell), and then, looking at me spitefully, said: "On January 15." With disbelief and alarm I asked her again, and she repeated the same thing. And one of the judges — I don't know them — said: "Why do you keep coming here and



bothering us: you're the mother and you'll be notified of the trial by notice." I believed him and left. Very much alarmed by their behaviour, I took my seventeen-year-old daughter along and returned to the courthouse. Through a window we saw the judges sitting down in session. This was some forty minutes later, that is at about 4:40 p.m. We rushed up to the door and the militiaman at first would not let us enter, but when he did, I saw my son Volodymyr in the dock.

Apart from 15 militiamen there was no one else in the courtroom; Judge Momot sat at the table with two assessors from some factory, and near them the lying secretary, Mayivska. The trial was coming to an end. In our presence one more witness was being questioned, eighteen-year-old Larysa Dolishnya, who probably worked at the Enlistment Office, for she was saying that in the Enlistment Office the door between her office and that of Colonel Derevianko was ajar and she could hear Volodymyr refusing to acknowledge his second draft notice. The judge then asked my son which sentence he would choose for himself. My son said he did not understand the question. Then the judge repeated: "Severe regime or very severe?" This question was put to him before the final statement, probably because the procurator was not present in court, so my son was supposed to pass his own sentence. My son responded that he could not choose his own sentence, just as he did not recognize the legality of the Soviet court, for he was no longer a Soviet citizen, having renounced his Soviet citizenship in protest at his unlawful expulsion from university on September 21, 1980.

After this they allowed my son a final statement. My son expressed his outrage and made complaints, but no one seemed to be listening to him. There was no attorney present at the trial, since I did not have the means to hire one (three in our family are in prison, and I was forced to retire on a pension without seniority); and who would have listened anyway, when the sentence had been prepared long in advance. I had heard the sentence several days earlier from the KGB chief, Akinin.

I, a mother, could partially stand in for an attorney, since I know the whole truth, which could have helped the court to deal with this case, but not only was I not informed of the trial, lies were also hurled at me. I do not know why I was not summoned as a witness, probably because no one wanted to hear the truth in this case, for Art. 68, Section 3 of the Criminal Code states that the challenge of a witness



for family reasons cannot serve as grounds for his rejection. And, really, why have witnesses at such a summary and hurried trial?

This being the case, what could I have hoped for, what good could I have expected, sitting there in court? And so it happened. After a break, the judge returned to the room and hastily announced: "Three years of corrective labour, general regime!" and fled from the courtroom. I could not even get permission to say good-bye to my son, and on my name day too.

I felt sorry for my son, not because of the severity of his sentence, but because of the way the trial looked, together with that Judge Momot...Strange.

On the other hand, perhaps in my haste I really did not comprehend everything properly, perhaps this is the way a Soviet people's court should function, the way it had acted in my son's case. If so, then all I can do is ask your forgiveness...

## **A PROGNOSIS OF THE SITUATION**

The women of the Sichko family, in protecting the imprisoned members of their family and ignoring warnings from the KGB about contact with the Ukrainian Helsinki Group, are under threat of arrest. The youngest member of the family — the daughter Oksana — will not be able to continue her education, for she belongs to a family which has experienced political repression during all the periods of existence of the repressive Soviet regime.

The members of the family who are imprisoned have no guarantees at all that they will be released upon the completion of their sentences, for in the USSR it is not uncommon for the regime to start new judicial proceedings against those imprisoned on religious or political grounds. The application of punitive psychiatry will always hang over each of them, especially over the eldest son, Vasyi.

## **HOW TO HELP THE SICHKOS**

The traditional forms of defence of prisoners of conscience utilized in the West could save the women of the Sichko family from arrest. Urgent defense campaigns by government, religious, public, scientific, medical and other groups could ward off the dangers threatening the imprisoned male members of the Sichko family.

No one can expect an early release of the imprisoned family members, but *it is realistic to expect success in obtaining permission for the whole Sichko family to emigrate from the USSR.*

## APPENDIX

### NAMES OF PEOPLE PERSECUTING THE SICHKO FAMILY

- |                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Obukhova</b>       | — a psychiatrist in the Dolyna Region, Ivano-Frankivsk Province; gave Vasyl Sichko a diagnosis of schizophrenia.  |
| <b>Burdeynyi</b>      | — a professor of psychiatry, head of the Ivano-Frankivsk Forensic Psychiatric Commission.   |
| <b>Yerlykin</b>       | — procurator for the Dolyna Region, Ivano-Frankivsk Province.   |
| <b>Antonenko B.M.</b> | — procurator for Lviv Province; sanctioned the arrest of Vasyl Sichko and Petro Sichko.   |
| <b>Kriuchkov</b>      | — judge in the process against Vasyl Sichko and Petro Sichko on 4.12.1980, Lviv Provincial Court.   |
| <b>Rudenko</b>        | — deputy procurator for Lviv Province, state prosecutor in the process against Vasyl Sichko and Petro Sichko on 4.12.1980, Lviv Provincial Court.   |
| <b>Zavallo</b>        | — dean of the Department of Mechanical and Mathematical Studies at Kiev State University, sanctioned the groundless expulsion of Volodymyr Sichko from the University (direction 192, 21.3.1980).   |
| <b>Panasovych</b>     | — a lecturer in the Department of Mechanical and Mathematical Studies at Kiev State University (Functional Analysis). Consciously gave Volodymyr Sichko a failing grade to create the grounds for his expulsion from the University at the insistence of the KGB. |
| <b>Medvedev</b>       | — an official of the Ivano-Frankivsk KGB. Openly told Volodymyr Sichko's mother that it was not convenient for the state to educate its enemies (Volodymyr Sichko's parents were jailed for political reasons at the time of the post-war Stalinist repressions). |
| <b>Momot</b>          | — judge in the trial of Volodymyr Sichko, 9.1.1981, Dolyna, Ivano-Frankivsk Province.   |













