

1937 May 20 Anton Odeh Karra'a to Katherine – George mistreated

Bethlehem

Dear Mrs. Katrina, may God preserve her,

Greetings, etc. I am writing this to tell you that following my previous letter in which I mentioned how your son George escaped from his folks and came to us and told us that his father intends to get married. And he told us that they are abusing him and beating him up. He told us how they came and took him from here by force. A few days after he left, he sent us a letter, which you will find enclosed. It seems now that they have begun to abuse him more than before. If you can manage to have him by you very soon, please do that, because if you cannot do it, he will be lost with his family. If you can send the proper papers and travel expenses, we can smuggle him from their clutches. I inform you that a girl was born to us a month ago and as for your brother Mitri, he is living in the house on top. His wife and little boy have died, may they rest in peace and may he prolong your children's life. Greetings to your daughter Julia and to Freddy and Mary and to your sister Jamileh and her family. Please write and tell us about your conditions. From here, all our children kiss your hands. Your sister Na'ame sends you her greetings, your brother Mitri and his daughters send you their greetings, and your sister Liza and her family send you their greetings.

Your brother in law who blesses you,

Anton Odeh Karra'a

P.S. My dear sister, if you can send a power of attorney in the name of our cousin Anton so he can free the boy from their hands and teach your husband a lesson for his ugly deeds and for his marriage.

P.P.S. Mrs. Katrina, our cousin [wife] Na'ame had told you that when he [George] ran away and came to us when we saw his condition and he told us about his treatment, we went mad and lost our minds because the boy had been abused and humiliated from excessive beating. They put him to work in the vineyards like a common laborer, like a peasant working for food, like a servant. When his father Suleiman and his cousin Shukri came we refused to cooperate with them so they went and complained to the police department. The police ordered us to hand him over to his father, we refused the police order and as a result they arrested us and held us for two hours until they brought the boy, screaming and fighting. His father and the police officers were holding him and he was saying, 'I want to stay with my uncle Anton.' When they took him, they started abusing him more than before. Every day he sends us a letter pleading for help. We have included his letter inside this letter, hoping that you will send his entry papers and the money so we can smuggle them from their house. This is our duty. He is always begging us to write to you in order to save him from them.

Anton Odeh Karra'a

Translated by Salim Tamari