

AMBASSADE D'HAITI  
WASHINGTON

RECEIVED  
NOV 13 1979  
WASHINGTON OFFICE

October 26, 1979

Editor  
New York Times  
229 West 43rd Street  
New York, New York 10036

Dear Sir:

Prof. Paul Lehmann's views (Op Ed, Oct. 25) in part reflect the same concern for the plight of undocumented Haitians in Florida as I expressed in my unpublished letter of August 22 concerning the Haitian family forced overboard and drowned off the Florida coast.

But the professor seems to be weeping in his own naivete when he declares, without knowing or visiting Haiti, that the emigration of 8,000 Haitians to Florida is due to alleged political persecution.

He should know that Haitians have been leaving in a continuous flow since 1926 when the U.S. Marines arbitrarily occupied our country and remained for almost 20 years. At that time they took refuge in Cuba and the Dominican Republic which were starting their sugar empires. They sought economic opportunity just as they do today.

We agree that the Haitians in Florida, whose forefathers shed their blood in Georgia, Virginia and Florida in your country's fight for freedom and independence, should today meet a more favorable treatment of their case. We have been constantly and actively working in that direction.

We believe a definitive and appropriate solution could be found in a reciprocal gesture of understanding and generosity on the part of the Executive and Legislative Branches and the strong support of the community to admit, on a special basis, the Haitian immigrants whose only recourse under stringent U.S. Immigration Law has been to claim political status.

The same spirit led the Haitian people and their government in 1824 to raise \$300,000 to ransom and bring to our shores 6,000 American Blacks to live in freedom and dignity. Those Americans left their mark on the quality of life in Haiti.

We can't help but urge the New York Times and Professor Lehmann to put their weight in that new and promising direction.

Sincerely,

Georges Salomon  
Ambassador of Haiti