

Carlos Lazo cycles across the US following the path of love and hope against the blockade

By: Claudia Díaz Pérez / Radio Rebelde
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The Cuban-American professor Carlos Lazo, relatives and friends, are biking more than 3,000 miles from Seattle to Washington D.C since July 10th. Once there, he hopes to meet Donald Trump, Senators, Congressmen and Congresswomen, so as to convince all of them to lift the U.S. blockade imposed on the Cuban people.

While in a rest stop, a thrilled, excited professor agreed to talk to *Radio Rebelde* via *Messenger*. The “*profe*” revealed in exclusive to *Radio Rebelde* new details of the first days of the pilgrimage — five times the distance from Havana to Santiago de Cuba.

“This pilgrimage we are making, cycling across the U.S., is because we want to build bridges of love between our two peoples, Cuba and the U.S. We want the economic sanctions —which have been exacerbated in recent days— lifted, as they are negatively affecting the Cuban people.”

In the “tour of friendship and hope,” they have met blonds, black people, mestizos, Republicans and Democrats. From the Pacific Coast to the Atlantic Ocean they will exchange thoughts in different communities, neighborhoods, churches.

“People stop us on the street. When we take a rest to drink water and they see the truck with all these Cuban and American flags, the posters, they ask us what this is all about. And we tell them about the importance of creating a good relationship between our two countries, and the urgency to end this 60-years-old policy that impedes our two nations to embrace each other and enjoy a wonderful relation.”

We are crossing the U.S., said the professor, “sacrificing ourselves, cycling, as if we were making a pilgrimage to the Rincón de San Lázaro to make our dreams come true.”

In his Facebook profile, the Cuban-American explained his followers that the knot suffocating the Cuban people has been increasingly tightened and all this escalation is taking place amid a pandemic, as if the coronavirus outbreak did not bring its own suffering.

Few months ago, Lazo wrote a request to the President of the U.S., Donald Trump, to lift the financial and commercial restrictions on Cuba, amid the consequent economic crisis triggered by the pandemic. “I received no answer at all. The request was signed by 20,000 citizens, mostly Cuban-Americans. A great deal of the Cuban community residing in the U.S. show a profound love for a nation that welcomed them once with open arms, but they also show love for our homeland, Cuba.”

The cyclists, wearing in their sports jersey the flags of both nations, departed with no guarantee they will meet Donald Trump, but they have already concluded talks with Senators, Congressmen and Congresswomen.

“I do not know if we are going to meet anyone in the White House, or an office. But we are pretty sure we are going to request the lifting of those sanctions hurting our people, the Cuban family, here and there.”

In the opinion of the high school Spanish teacher in Seattle, the U.S. blockade also affects Cubans residing abroad because we cannot enjoy a normal relationship with our relatives in the island. We have to use thousands of ways to help them as direct flights to different provinces in Cuba are getting canceled.”

The leader of *Fábrica de Sueños* (Dreams Factory) —project where his American students got involved in— said that he has found a lot of support along the way: “People wave at us. People stare at our colorful sports jerseys, our two flags shaking hands.”

About to ride again, the professor says goodbye to radio listeners.

“I just can’t tell you more as we are about to get going. It is my turn now on bicycle. We are a little bit late, actually. We biked 150-miles yesterday. I will keep you updated. We had a brief ceremony before departing, giving details of our reasons and we commended ourselves to Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre, Patroness of Cuba, and old man Saint Lazarus to open the ways.”

With emotional voice, and certainly about to cry, he sent a message: “Be with us, brothers and sisters. We need your support. Send my best to everyone there.”

Believe me I will, professor Carlos Lazo. Millions of citizens praying for the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States are cycling along with you

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translation Staff