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HEMISPHERE SEARCHLIGHT

By VIRGINIA PREWETT

New York City has for many years been notable for its basic indifference to our Latin American neighbors and all that pertains to them. This is a paradox, for New York is the financial capital of the enormous trade and investment interests that the U.S. maintains in Latin America. It is also, curiously enough, a city with a very large Spanish-speaking population.

The way New York expresses its indifference to things Latin American is to force them into enclaves. Thus U.S. business that is interested in Latin America has its enclave. Several active yet nevertheless specialized organizations — the Council for the Americas, the Pan American Society, the Southern Cross Club and a few others — interest themselves in hemisphere affairs and all things connected with them. They provide excellent and very useful links with the New York enclaves interested in Latin America and with Latin American visitors and countries.

But New York on the whole is culturally oriented toward Europe, from whence came the great flow of immigration that has made the city the gateway to the United States. Unless New Yorkers have some special business or professional connection with Latin America, they are likely to ignore it. This is why a two-year-old organization called the Committee for the Americas is unique and its work noteworthy.

The Committee for the Americas is made up of New Yorkers who somehow or other have become interested in Latin America, who are enthusiastic about things Latin American and who give a great deal of their spare time to acting as a bridge between the enclaved world of Latin American interests and the general New York public.

The active group that makes up the Committee is limited to ten people and they pay \$10 a year in dues for the privilege of working for

the Americas. A number of non-active supporters are "permitted" to pay slightly larger sums.

The Committee was started by Miss Duncan MacDonald, who has the only interview program on Radio Station WQXR. After several trips to Latin America, she became aware of a gap between the special New York world of Latin Americans and Latin Americanists and the general public. Her approach to bridging this gap was to interest people in the communications fields in the idea of a group effort on the problem.

The first effort by the Committee for the Americas was to compile a list of several hundred Latin American names giving their correct spelling and their correct pronunciation.

This was distributed on a limited scale to local radio and television stations and to New York newspapers and journalists.

The response to this effort to remove one barrier between Latin Americans and New Yorkers — confusion over the spelling and pronunciation of Latin American names — proved its instant success. The Committee was flooded with requests for copies from many U.S. and European cities. Business and educational organizations all over Latin America and even the Peace Corps requested hundreds of copies.

The latest contribution by this dynamic group is a Calendar of Latin American Events for 1965 which has been compiled and issued to the communications world.

The members of the Committee have listed a formidable array of events affecting Latin America, from Latin American Independence days to forthcoming cultural events due to take place in New York. As nothing else could, it will keep calling Latin America to the attention of busy people in the newspaper, radio and television world who otherwise would miss knowing about these events altogether.