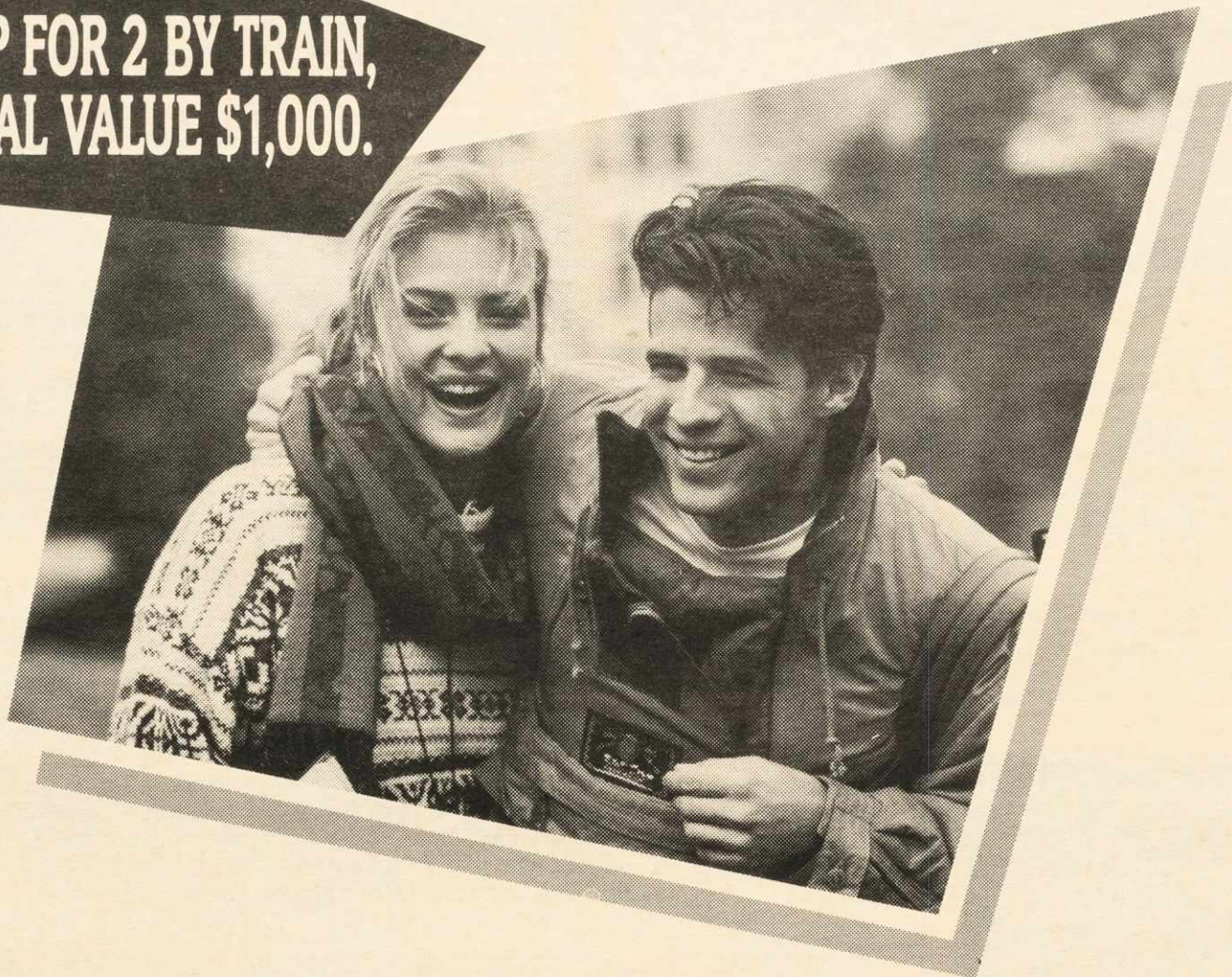


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american agenda. The recent rise in pan-Hispanism has paralleled the arrival of Gorbachev's new way of thinking, and there is also a growing disillusionment with Washington's meddling.

"While these three things have come about it has led to a decrease in the Cold War filter which has been in effect since World War Two. The only holdout is the policy Washington has toward Cuba. Readmission is important for democratization within Cuba. By readmitting Cuba, it exercises great influence.

So the OAS is at a dramatically new stage in its existence. If Canada is keen on democratization and change in Latin America, it must realize its potential and should use its votes to aid this new initiative. We are in a magnificent position to affect change."

Kirk pointed out however, that the greatest liability of Canada is its dependency on the United States. Despite this, he is adamant about the possibility of Canada becoming a key member of the OAS.

"I am positive Canada has an important role to play and has tremendous potential. But only if we have the political clarity and vision. I'm not convinced we have that yet, but the potential is there."

The concluding consensus of the delegation was that it was in Canada's self-interest to become a member of the OAS, but the major beneficiary would be Latin America. Provided, Kirk stressed, "that there is a revived, renovated, and energized OAS. If it is going to be the rubberstamp as before, then the Canadian initiative should be discarded."

The symposium comprised mainly of Canadians under the auspices of the department for External Affairs, but also included the Chilean and Honduran ambassadors to the OAS, the secretary-general of the OAS, Baena Soares, Canada's ambassador to the OAS, Jean-Paul Hubert, and notable American academics and journalists.

Kirk, who has been active in Latin American studies since 1971 and has been teaching at Dalhousie for the last 12 years, helped represent the academic sector of the delegation, which also included faculty from Queen's, McGill, Toronto, and Carleton universities.

Other members of the Canadian delegation included former NDP leader Ed Broadbent, conservative MP John Boseley, Maureen O'Neil, head of the North-South Institute, and Garry German, president of the Canadian Council of the Americas. In charge of the Forum was Ed Dosman, a highly respected specialist in Latin American affairs.

Peter McKenna, a political science graduate student at Dalhousie, won the Forum's nationwide essay competition on Canada's potential role in the OAS.