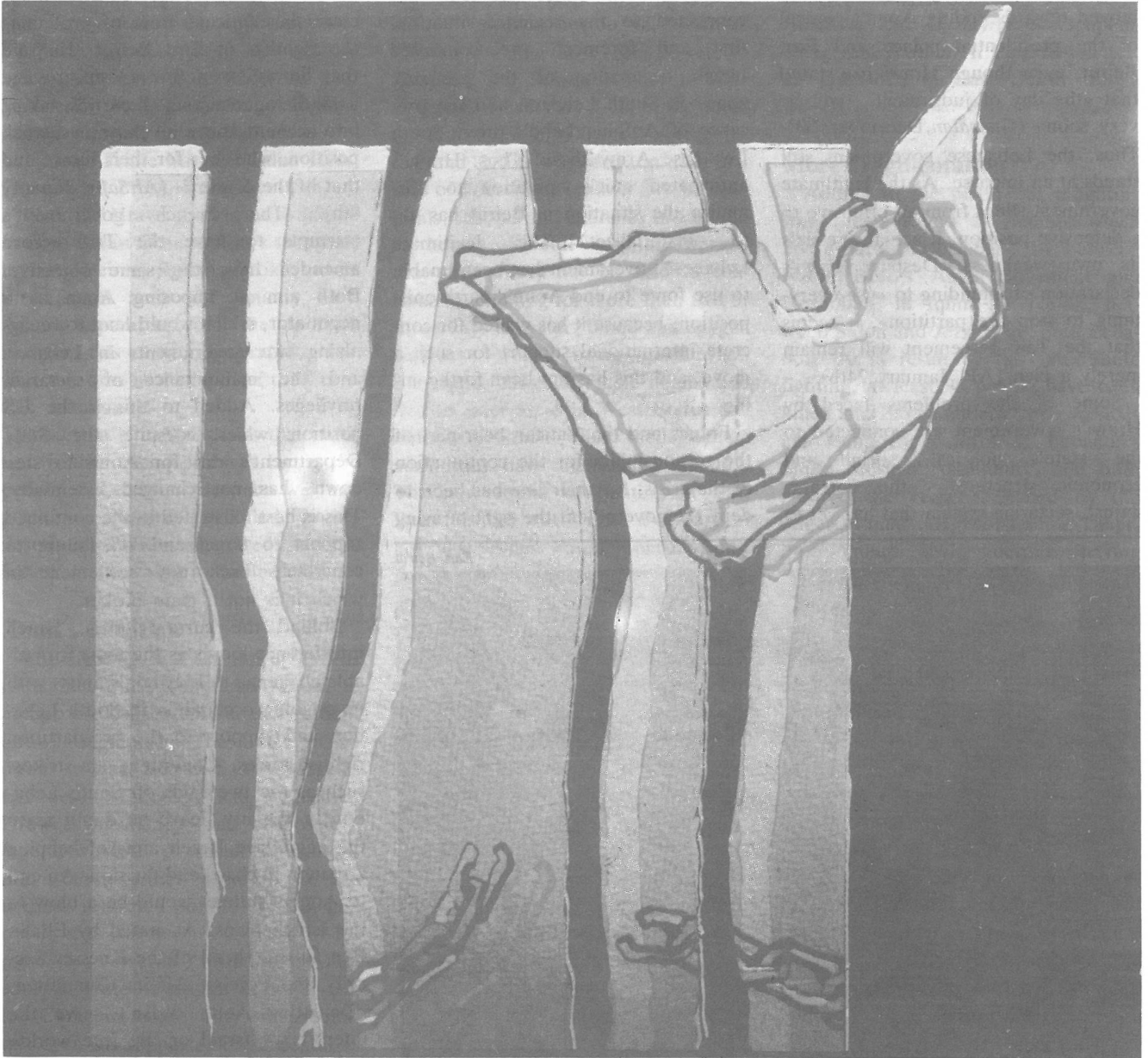


Jordan

New Democratic Era?



What is happening in Jordan? Is democracy really taking hold in the midst of the tyranny which has prevailed in the Arab world for decades? Or are the new democratic procedures only a tactical retreat by King Hussein, taken under the impact of the political and economic crisis which threatened to bring down the regime itself? In this case, the monarchy will revert to rep-

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ression as soon as there is a ray of hope that the crisis may be resolved.

Observers are divided on these issues. Some consider that the swift democratic changes are the natural outcome of objective changes that have occurred on the political, economic and social levels in Jordan over the past few years. In this view, these changes are a response to those

taking place in many other parts of the world, i.e., a Jordanian perestroika. Others see the current situation as no more than a repetition of the experience of the mid-fifties, at the time of Suleiman Nabulsi's government which was quickly aborted by the monarchy.

A precise analysis of the background and future of the current developments requires us to avoid exaggeration when