



*Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has been at the centre of controversy during the past year. Convicted before the courts for using corrupt practices to win her Parliamentary seat, Mrs. Gandhi refused to resign and instead made ex post facto changes in the Constitution and tightened her own control on the Government. She is shown here shortly after her conviction surrounded by Members of Parliament who had come to her residence in New Delhi to show their support.*

*Mrs. Gandhi has gone back on father's promises*

system. There is poetic injustice in her jailing men and women who inherited a non-violent tradition of civil disobedience from Mohandas K. Gandhi as a means of fighting selfishness and corruption in high places.

The ruling Indian National Congress not only broke India's tryst with democracy, to paraphrase Jawaharlal Nehru's speech on the eve of Indian independence in 1947 about keeping a "tryst with destiny". As Prime Minister, Mrs. Gandhi has also gone back on another promise by her father in that stirring address delivered moments before midnight brought freedom from foreign rule. "The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer," said Nehru. "It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity. The ambition of the greatest man of our generation has been to wipe every tear from every eye."

#### **Unfulfilled**

That ambition of a greater Gandhi has not been fulfilled. Poverty and the other symptoms of an unreformed society have not been abolished. The Gandhian ideal of

building an equitable society from the village up has not been achieved. Asia's democratic experiment has failed, hardly be resurrected by phony reforms or by superficial economic improvements resulting from a good monsoon and petty fears of petty bureaucrats.

If peaceful consensus has not worked in India, what will work?

Mrs. Gandhi has shown herself able enough to manipulate her police, press and political apparatus to retain power for an indefinite period. I don't imagine that this will last, as popular sentiment and anger tick ever away on India's alarm-clock, is as realistic as to believe that Indians can afford more than enough food for the masses under enlightened leadership. It is the masses that, as the Marxist Communist leader Jyoti Basu once told me in Calcutta, "We don't have the conditions for a revolution on the Indian model will not necessarily come in India. The Indian Army does not have guns, however; it has no love for Mrs. Gandhi or the Indian police. It may be the only all-India alternative to chaos at the first, or second bad