

'Hyprocrisy' After Mylai

To the Editor:

And so the last of the Mylai trials has ended with exoneration. On the Vietnamese side, considerably more than 100 unarmed men, women and children slaughtered with the utmost brutality by not one but many Americans. On the American side, a single conviction leading to a sentence of life imprisonment, subsequently reduced to twenty years and no doubt further reducible on appeal.

In a letter published in The Times on Dec. 28, 1969, I urged that an international commission be appointed to investigate Songmy (Mylai) by the U.N. or some other international organ. My argument was that any Congressional or other American investigative body would inevitably be confronted by "biases—sometimes acknowledged but sometimes not consciously sensed—stemming from conventional notions of what constitutes American national interest and the like."

Why, after all, should anyone now be surprised by the outcome of the Mylai trials, when even in our own country members of racial minorities, war protesters, students, prisoners, or what have you, are repeatedly killed by persons in authority, and when the resulting legal action, if any, is commonly directed against the victims rather than the killers?

We still have the unmitigated effrontery to assure the world of our "peace-loving" intentions and the like, while accusing other peoples, e.g., the Indians, of aggression. No wonder the world loathes us for our hypocrisy.

DERK BODDE

Professor of Chinese Studies
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Dec. 18, 1971

•