

THE AFRO REPLIES TO EX-SENATOR BRUCE

When the Federal Council of Churches made public last week portions of the report of the investigation by Professor Broadus Mitchell of Johns Hopkins, of the Salisbury lynching, one of the first to defend the Lynching Shore of Maryland and the lynchers themselves was ex-U.S. Senator William Cabell Bruce, of Baltimore.

The ex-Senator's defense is indirect and persuasive, oratorical rather than logical, and more typical of the Ku Klux spellbinder than the statesman.

He is surprised that Dr. Mitchell called the Eastern Shore lynchers "mentally and spiritually backward." These people, says Mr. Bruce, are of "unmixed English descent." They are "our flesh and blood." In other words, we are all the sons of white women—we white folks must stick together.

This is the usual superiority propaganda of the K.K.K. where colored people, Jews, and foreigners are concerned.

The ex-Senator's second main defense of lynchers is subtile. First, he condemns lynching and urges punishment of lynchers. Then he paints a picture in which he terms a mentally defective colored man a "criminal," a "wild beast" and a "brute."

At most, this ignorant, underprivileged man was only one murderer. But the so-called superior white folks, "those of unmixed English descent," who hanged him, burned his body and danced like sex-mad ghouls—these 200 murderers—Mr. Bruce pictures as nice people with comfortable hotels, tilled fields and busy cities.

Too bad the ex-Senator scatters his descriptive adjectives without realizing that the Eastern Shore lynched a man hitherto peaceful, of good reputation, a steady worker and a thrifty citizen.

It didn't occur to him that under our system of justice, a man is innocent until proved guilty through fair and impartial legal procedure, and that in the light of more recent investigation, it is just possible the Eastern Shore whites have lynched the wrong man.

Our theory is that the murderer of the white Salisbury lumber man is another white man, and that he walks the streets today because he was able to shift the crime to the shoulders of one whose descent didn't happen to be "English."