



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on April 7, 2021

Canceling Conifers? Triggering Tree May be Too “Racist” to be School Mascot

They probably thought they’d finally come up with a school mascot so banal, so antiseptic, so plain vanilla that it couldn’t possibly offend anyone. That is, until a school official suggested that evergreen trees could conjure thoughts of black people being lynched.

Never mind the ridiculousness of having a tree as a mascot in the first place (more on that momentarily). Now we have the moronic being trumped by the idiotic. As commentator Thomas Lifson [quips](#), while leftists were once called “tree-huggers,” the *New York Post* [reported](#) on Sunday that a



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Portland high school delayed a vote to change its mascot to an evergreen tree over concerns about its potential ties to lynching, a report said.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett High School — named after the prominent black activist and reporter who documented lynching — was set to vote on the new mascot last Tuesday until a board director shared community concerns over the tree’s imagery, [the Portland Tribune reported](#).

“I’m wondering if there was any concern with the imagery there, in using a tree ... as our mascot?” Portland Public Schools Board of Education Director Michelle DePass asked at the meeting.

“I think everyone comes with blind spots and I think that might’ve been a really big blind spot.”

DePass should consider that other people’s blind spots may not be the problem here. But it turns out that others had supposedly pondered her concerns. Small minds think alike, I guess.

In fact, “Mascot committee member Martin Osborne told the Tribune that the lynching connection was discussed, but those concerns were put to rest,” [informs](#) the Daily Wire.

“We did talk about it, but we were looking at the symbolism more as a tree of life, than a tree of death,” Osborne, who is black, said in response to DePass’ comments,” the site continued.

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The backstory here has gone unreported. The school’s current mascot is the wholly appropriate “Trojans.” While there’s no information readily available on why it’s being purged, you can imagine in this “woke” time that it’s too European and white.

Moreover, the school itself [was just renamed](#) Ida B. Wells-Barnett High School earlier this year (inspired by, you guessed it, the George Floyd incident). It had been Woodrow Wilson High.



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So how did the school go from warriors to trees for a mascot? It's the kind of banality that emerges from committee; in the school's case, the committee was one "comprised of students, staff and community members," the *Tribune* tells us.

Of course, naming a team the Indians, Braves, Redskins, Trojans, Fighting Irish or the like is a compliment to the referenced groups. You'd never, for example, name a team the Portland Pusillanimous Pipsqueaks, though that may now be wholly appropriate.

As for trees, I love 'em. But, as a mascot? Really? Unless they're [these trees](#), from *Babes in Toyland*, I can't see it.

But, hey, it's a "tree of life." How soy-boyish. And as we descend into [Eloi status, the Beijing Morlocks](#) loom on the world's far side.

Of course, much could be pointed out here. First, coniferous trees weren't used for lynching. Second, more whites than blacks were lynched in American history. Third, this whole topic is dumb.

This said, the Sensitivity Police are trying to express an idea, so it may be beneficial to explain it better than they understand it.

All or virtually all of us have nerves that can be hit, or irrational hang-ups or fears. This used to be called being sensitive about certain things; now it's called being "triggered."

In my case, I've never liked pool drains. Yes, I know it's not rational, and I have figured out what the apprehension likely stems from in my early childhood. But I still can and do swim in pools, and I don't ask that we "cancel" drains or somehow obscure them.

In fact, this idea that the world should bend over backward to accommodate our hang-ups is the epitome of self-centeredness and a spoiled-brat mentality. People who demand such concessions shouldn't be pandered to but mocked. Social pressure could eliminate soy-boy tendencies.

We still do this, by the way; only, we mock the wrong things. Robin DiAngelo's now-popular book *White Fragility* is Exhibit A.

This isn't to say that certain sensitivities aren't understandable. Reading the term "rape" may evoke bad feelings in a female sexual-assault victim. But this doesn't mean we should rejigger our vocabulary or slap "trigger warnings" on the word, as [has been done](#).

Where, after all, does this end? For most everyone is triggered by something and most everything triggers someone. How about shooting, dog bite, and burn victims; car and airplane crash and shipwreck survivors; and people who were brutally beaten as children with broomsticks? Do we ban, respectively, guns, dogs, fire, autos, aircraft, ships, and brooms or at least the terms describing them?

No, the Thought Police don't actually try banning everything — just the things triggering their preferred groups. They *discriminate*.

It's way past time to tell these people to grow up and start thinking about themselves less and others more. I mean, if you're triggered by a tree, how do you think a tree feels when seeing a person with an axe?



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