

## **Jeff Foxworthy and Socialism**

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Jeff Foxworthy is a comedian who made his name with an act based on lines of the form, “If you do such and such, you’re probably” or “you could very well be” or “you might just possibly be a redneck.” The humor in this bit came from Foxworthy’s exploitation of stereotypes about a certain group found primarily in the American South. He could get away with these jokes, even in these politically correct times, because he was also making the point that the group he was having fun with, which he also identifies with, exemplifies a lifestyle rather than a race or a religion. You do not have to be white to be a redneck.

There is another, more insidious group that also embodies a philosophy rather than a legally protected classification. While there have been cyclical efforts throughout modern history to root these people out, they only share one thing: an irrational fear of markets.<sup>1</sup> Because they can differ along so many other dimensions, they are difficult to recognize and often wind up in charge of their own persecution, allowing them to hound their intellectual opponents while they proliferate. Since the widespread acceptance of their views is a real threat to our current prosperity, I thought I would do an educational service by using Foxworthy’s template to set down a list of telltale signs indicative of membership in this variegated group.

So here goes:

If you think everyone should wear a uniform, you are probably a socialist.

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<sup>1</sup> The definition of socialism that I am using here is the economic definition of [“What is Socialism?”](#)

If you want to immediately double the minimum wage in your neighborhood, you are very likely a socialist.

If you want to build a wall on the border—whether to keep people in or keep them out—you are almost surely a socialist.

If you want the government to default on its debt, you are absolutely a socialist.

If you think it is okay to threaten to default on the debt in order to extort other measures, you are probably a socialist.

If you think the current account balance or the trade balance are more important than gross domestic product, you are definitely a socialist. The main reason why Adam Smith wrote *The Wealth of Nations* was to discredit this view.

If you think the government should be the only seller of alcohol, you could very well be a socialist.

If you want to go back to the gold standard, there is a good chance you are a socialist.

If you think it is the president's job to negotiate the best<sup>2</sup> trade deals, you just might possibly be a socialist.

If you think Obamacare is socialism, you are probably a socialist.<sup>3</sup>

If you often complain that other people are uncharitable, you might very well be a socialist.

If you want everyone to donate their organs without compensation, you could be a socialist.

If you obsess about the labor force participation rate, you are probably a socialist.

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<sup>2</sup> It is the vague meaning of “best” that is problematic. If by “best”, you mean a free-trade agreement, this would not be socialist.

<sup>3</sup> There are plenty of valid reasons to dislike Obamacare. The argument that it is socialist is not one of them.

If you like to make everyone take you to court to get what you owe them, you are almost certainly a socialist.

If you think it is okay to use eminent domain to expand a business, you could be a socialist.

If you think you are entitled to the free use of land that does not belong to you, you are very likely a socialist.

If you are opposed to a carbon tax, you might just possibly be a socialist.

If you think Roy Kohn was a good guy, you are probably a socialist.

If you want to remove a whole group from the labor force—no matter what you plan to do with them—you are almost certainly a socialist.

If you are a capitalist who built your fortune by evading competition or exploiting legal loopholes, you are also a socialist.