

On Farm Workers and Small Farmers:
Letter to J.E. Snyder
(May 4, 1906)

Terre Haute, Ind., May 4, 1906

Mr. J.E. Snyder,¹
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Dear Comrade:—

I know of no reason why farm workers and small farmers who accept our principles and are imbued with the revolutionary spirit should not be organized into locals of the Socialist Party. The fact is, we need this very element and should organize them to the fullest extent compatible with the uncompromising principles and tactics of the socialist movement.

I have met many of the farmers down your way who were revolutionary to the heart's core, and furnished the very best material for the party movement.

With best wishes to yourself and comrades, I remain

Yours fraternally,

Eugene V. Debs

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¹ At the time of this letter J.E. Snyder was the state secretary of the Socialist Party of Oklahoma. Snyder's socialist activity began in July 1903, following his graduation from Wichita College, when he was named as deputy state organizer for the Socialist Party of Kansas. He moved to Oklahoma City in 1904 and was elected secretary-treasurer of the Oklahoma party. Snyder launched a publication called the *Oklahoma Socialist Bulletin* in September 1906. Snyder studied at the party-affiliated Rand School of Social Science in 1907, before returning to Kansas, making his home near the *Appeal to Reason* in Girard. Snyder was elected state secretary of the Socialist Party of Kansas in December 1907. Snyder was a lecturer for the Socialist Party's lyceum bureau in 1913, a department headed by fellow

Kansas L.E. Katterfeld. Snyder later moved to the San Francisco bay area, where he was editor of the *Oakland World* from 1917 to 1919. He was a founding member of the Communist Labor Party in September 1919, activity which led to his arrest in December under the state's criminal syndicalism law, under which he was tried twice but never convicted. In 1921 he briefly edited a publication called the *Western Worker* before it was merged with the official organ of the Workers Party of America, *The Toiler*. He would return to Oklahoma as an organizer for the WPA in 1923.