



## Intertwined histories: *JPS* at 50, La Via Campesina at 30

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EDITORS' NOTE



## Intertwined histories: *JPS* at 50, La Via Campesina at 30

The *Journal of Peasant Studies* was founded 50 years ago, in 1973, amidst an oil price crisis, the end of the gold standard and the beginning of the debt crisis, an agrarian famine in Bangladesh, and what some consider the last of the 'peasant wars'. Twenty years later, when the peasant movement *La Via Campesina* (LVC) was born in 1993, the world was in another cataclysmic moment: the end of the Cold War consolidated the neoliberal orthodoxy that had already wrought violence in the form of structural adjustment policies that dismantled public institutions, deregulated trade, and provoked resistance – including transnational alliances across rural social movements. Today LVC brings together 182 organisations of peasants, small farmers and fishers, and rural workers from 81 countries under the banner of food sovereignty.

We mark this milestone – 50 years of *JPS* and 30 years of LVC – with this special collection of papers. The loosely-connected compilation consists of regular research articles, including a sign-off piece by outgoing Editor-in-Chief Saturnino M. Borrás, Jr; our editors' articulation of the need for continuity in the journal as well as agile responsiveness to converging and compounding crises across rural worlds; and Tania Murray Li's critique of the persistent and problematic dualism drawn between peasant farmers and corporation, in a paper which, as she observes, illustrates the 'iterative back and forth' between theory and empirical investigation which is a hallmark of *JPS*.

The substantial Grassroots Voices section in this issue is dedicated to reflections on lessons from 30 years of LVC, with scholar-activists and activist-scholars from within and outside the movement in conversation with one another, in the form of joint reflections and interviews. Commentary papers present reflections from past Editor, Henry Bernstein; a world-historical contextualisation of the current crises by Phil McMichael; and an agenda articulating the agenda and manifesto of the Collective of Agrarian Scholar-Activists of the Global South (CASAS).

We as the Editors of *JPS* are humbled and somewhat awed by the responsibility of holding this precious space and resource, and are grateful for the guidance of our Editorial Collective and the support and solidarity of our International Advisory Board. *JPS* is truly a collective enterprise, with dynamic teams of deeply committed scholars now taking responsibility for its distinct sections: Grassroots Voices, Book Reviews and Key Concepts in Critical Agrarian Studies series. Across all these, the journal benefits from the invigorating voices and visions of early- to mid-career researchers, mostly from the Global South, some of whom sustain organic links with activist movements, reflecting the journal's political commitments.

The continued traction of the journal forms the centre of a growing ecosystem of *JPS* activities and outputs – an interactive website ([www.peasantjournal.org](http://www.peasantjournal.org)) as a hub for conversations, a social media presence, an Agrarian Politics podcast, the Agrarian Conversations seminar programme, and an annual Writeshop in Critical Agrarian Studies and Scholar-Activism. As we move through this year, and mark half a century of development from peasant

studies to critical agrarian studies, we look forward to robust and critical engagement across these platforms and spaces with the global *JPS* community.

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