



# Change policies that have led to the resignation of Marshall Sahlins

written by Allegra  
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Campaign launched in March 2013.

The recent extraordinary act of Marshall Sahlins in resigning from the National Academy of Sciences is an exemplary expression of the critical function of Anthropology: at once for its advocacy of the rights of indigenous and minority peoples, and for its defiance, in the cause of scientific integrity, of an unwelcome collusion between the scholarly community and the powers-that-be.

In withdrawing from the most prestigious American scientific institution in protest of its support of research designed to improve the mission-efficiency of



the U.S. military, Sahlins reaffirms his personal history of opposition to the neocolonial wars of recent decades, beginning with his leading role in the student and university movement against the war in Vietnam.

Motivated as well by the election of Napoleon Chagnon to the National Academy of Sciences, Sahlins' protest reflects his long-standing criticism of biological reductionism in the human sciences, in Chagnon's case amplified by an anthropology of the Yanomami people of Amazonia worthy of tabloid journalism for its combination of ethnocentrism and scientific incompetence.

Simultaneously protesting against the militarization of scholarship and the consecration of prejudice, Sahlins offers a moral and intellectual example that deserves to be followed not only by anthropologists but in the academy at large.

First signatories:

-Mauro Barbosa de Almeida, Professor, departamento de Antropologia, Universidade Estadual de Campinas

-Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Professor, Museu Nacional, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro

-Manuela Carneiro da Cunha, Professor emerita, departamento de Antropologia, University of Chicago

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