

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

December 17, 1942

Dr. Alvin Johnson
New School for Social Research
66 West 12 Street
New York, N.Y.

Dear Dr. Johnson:

Dr. Paul Leser has asked me for a statement in regard to his work. I know particularly his work on the plough, which is very thorough and painstaking and has been the source of much other research work in similar lines in Europe. From all I know about him I can recommend him most highly. I presume you have his bibliography. If not I will send you a copy which he left with me.

Yours very sincerely,

(signed)

Franz Boas

fb-e

COPY

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Avskrift.

Sedan Doktor Phil. Paul Leser hos undertecknad anhållit om ett utlåtande rörande hans person och vetenskapliga insatser, får jag härmed anföra följande.

Doktor Paul Leser, som i något mer än tre år vistats i Stockholm efter en utflyttning från Tyskland, är mig sedan många år tillbaka bekant som en utomordentligt framstående forskare på såväl den allmänna som den europeiska etnologiens områden. Genom framför allt sina framstående och omfattande utredningar om plogens och en mångfald andra jordbruksredskaps kulturhistoria intar Doktor Leser sedan många år ett rum bland de främsta forskarna på detta gebit, vilket inte minst framgår av den höga värdering och uppmärksamhet, som ägnats dessa hans arbeten liksom även hans recensioner och inlägg i mera framstående facktidskrifter i olika delar av världen. Efter sin ankomst till Stockholm har Doktor Leser varit sysselsatt med ingående vetenskapliga studier bl.a. rörande uppfostran hos olika folk, men har även genom föreläsningar och bidrag i fackpressen fullföljt sin tidigare verksamhet som vetenskaplig författare och akademisk lärare. Jag har också personligen haft förmånen av hans medverkan vid redigeringen av tidskriften Folkliv, där hans kritiska sans och stränga krav på exakthet och klarhet varit av största värde, samtidigt som det för honom själv medfört ett uppoffrande arbete av ovanlig intensitet. Personligen har Doktor Leser under de år han vistats i Sverige fört ett synnerligen tillbakadraget liv och har alltid synts mig som en förebild av korrekthet och försynthet. Det förefaller mig därför vara ett osedvanligt gott förvärv, som vårt land gjort genom hans hitflyttning, och det skulle smärta mig mycket, om han skulle lämna det. Det framgår av mina ord att jag förbehållslöst kan rekommendera honom, om han skulle söka sig till ett annat land, både som vetenskapsman och som människa är han förtjänt av de högsta lovord.

Stockholm den 5 juli 1940

Sigurd Erixon

Professor

Undertecknad, Notarius Publicus, betygar
härmed, att förestående är rätt avskrivet.
Stockholm den 10 juli 1940.

Vid avgift
En krona

Ex officio

A. J. Notarius Publicus



Translation:

(COPY)

Dr. Paul Leser who went over here from Germany, has been in Stockholm more than three years. Since many years he is known to me as an exceptionally prominent scientist in the fields of general and of European ethnology. He has become one of the most important authorities in this field, especially by his remarkable and extensive research work on the development of the plough and of a great number of different farming implements. His scientific work is highly esteemed and has drawn much attention, just as have his reviews all over the world. After he moved to Stockholm, he concentrated on extensive scientific research work, for instance, about education with different peoples. Furthermore, he continued his former activities as a scientific author and a university professor by giving lectures and by publications in professional journals. I myself had the privilege of having him as a co-editor of the journal "Folkliv". His subtle precision of mind and his strict demand for exactness and lucidity were of greatest value for the improvement of the journal, whereas this work meant for him much strain and personal devotion. As to his personal habits during his sojourn in Sweden, he lived in strict seclusion and I esteemed him as a model of correctness and modesty. Therefore I feel his moving into our country to be an unusual advantage for us and I would deeply regret if he should decide to leave. You may gather from my words that, in case he should move into another country, I would recommend him unconditionally. His scientific and personal standard is of the highest.

Stockholm, July 5, 1940

signed:

Sigurd Erixon
Professor

As Dr. Paul Leser has requested the undersigned to make a statement regarding his person and his scientific activities, I herewith wish to state the following:

Dr. Paul Leser, who for more than three years has resided in Stockholm after his leaving Germany, has been known to me for many years as a very outstanding scientist in the ~~field~~ field of general as well as European ethnology. Due to his outstanding and comprehensive researches on the plough and many other agricultural implements, Dr. Leser has since many years held a prominent place among the leading men in this field, which is proved by the esteem and attention given to his studies as well as to his discussions and contributions in the more prominent journals in the various parts of the world.

Since his arrival in Stockholm, Dr. Leser has devoted his time to intensive studies among others concerning the education among various peoples, but he has at the same time continued his former activities as a scientific writer and academic teacher by contributing to various journals and giving lectures.

I have also personally had the advantage of his cooperation in connecting with the editing of the magazine Folk-Liv, where his critical sense and his insistence on scientific exactness have been of the greatest value; also this required unremitting and sacrificing work of unusual intensity on his part.

Personally, Dr. Leser has lived a most secluded life during his residence in Sweden and always seemed to me a model of correctness and modesty. I have therefore always considered it an unusually good acquisition that our country ~~has~~ made through his moving to Sweden and it would be a great sorrow to me were he to leave us again. It is quite obvious from my above remarks that I can unreservedly recommend him were he to go to some other country; both as a scientist ~~and~~ as well as a man he deserves the highest praise.

REFERENCES

Dr. Sigurd Erixon, Professor of Ethnology, The University
of Stockholm, Sweden July 5, 1940

"... Dr. Paul Leser has been known to me for many years as an exceptionally prominent scholar in the fields of Anthropology and European Ethnology. His extensive studies on the cultural history of the plow and many other agricultural implements are considered outstanding and have assured him of a prominent place among the leading authorities. Even the reviews and shorter articles which he published in the anthropological periodicals of many countries enjoy the same admiration and attention paid to his larger publications.

"Since his arrival in Stockholm, Dr. Leser has continued his previous activities as a university professor and as a student by delivering his courses and by publishing articles in the periodicals of our field. Much of his time was devoted to his research work concerning child rearing among different races.

"I personally enjoyed the privilege of his assistance in his capacity as co-editor of the journal Folk-Liv. He showed untiring energy in this work. His critical mind and his uncompromising demand for scientific exactness were of the greatest value for the improvement of the journal.

"Dr. Leser always impressed me as a model of correctness and modesty. I wish to state that I can recommend him in every respect. His scientific as well as his personal standards are of the highest."

COPY

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

CENTRAL PARK WEST at 79TH STREET

NEW YORK, N. Y.

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

Dec. 7, 1942

To Whom It May Concern

I have known Dr. Paul Leser of Francfort for approximately fifteen years. I have read the more important of his books and articles and have frequently had the opportunity of discussing with him various subjects in the fields of anthropology and cultural history. I highly esteem his scholarly abilities as well as his character. The combination of meticulous accuracy in detail and wide general outlook which characterizes his work deserves special mention.

I take great pleasure in recommending Dr. Leser for any task of teaching or research pertaining to his field.

(Signed)

Robert Heine-Geldern

OLIVET COLLEGE

OLIVET, MICHIGAN

THE SCHOOL OF NATURAL
AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES

May 21, 1949

To Whom It May Concern:

Dr. Paul Leser and I have been colleagues on the Olivet College faculty. Because of the interrelationship of our fields (Anthropology and Biology) we have on several occasions in the past coordinated our teaching. I, therefore, have had ample opportunity to observe Dr. Leser's teaching qualifications and his relations with the students.

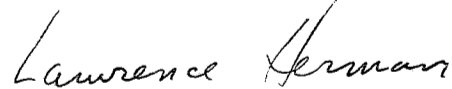
He is, without reservation, the most astute anthropologist I have met. Dr. Leser abounds with an energy which is reflected in his teaching and which serves to infect the students. He is extremely well liked by the students, and this popularity is attested to by the unusually large enrollment in his courses. In his Physical Anthropology course, it was necessary to teach genetics, and I had the pleasure to observe Dr. Leser's work in this particular task. It was amazing to see the amount of difficult, advanced genetical material which he was able to present and have understood by a group of students with no previous background in biology.

In reference to the use of facilities, Dr. Leser has exhibited an unusual capacity of initiative and personal resourcefulness. When he arrived at Olivet College, there were no books in the library on Anthropology. Fortunately, Dr. Leser has an extensive collection of valuable slides and a very excellent personal library of several thousand volumes, which were made available to the students. In the course of a few years, Dr. Leser has built the Anthropology section of the Olivet College Library until today it is one of the finest in the state.

Dr. Leser's academic training is of the highest calibre and his service as professor in European universities has added invaluable experience to his background. His relation with the faculty, both on an official as well as a social level, has been a most happy and pleasing association. He is extremely active in his field and is in constant touch with new developments through extensive perusal of current literature and by attending various conventions.

I do not, in the least, hesitate to recommend Dr. Leser for the position which you have in mind. His addition to the faculty will be a valuable asset to the school, and to the student body.

Very truly yours,



Lawrence Herman
Professor of Biology

LH:pf

208 West 151 Street
New York 30, N. Y.
June 29, 1949

Albert Teachers Agency
535 Fifth Avenue
New York, N. Y.

Gentlemen:

Dr. Paul Leser and I have been colleagues on the Olivet College faculty. Because of the interrelationship of our fields (Anthropology and Biology) we have on several occasions in the past coordinated our teaching. I, therefore, have had ample opportunity to observe Dr. Leser's teaching qualifications and his relations with his students.

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I do not, in the least, hesitate to recommend Dr. Leser highly.

Very truly yours,
Lawrence Herman
Lawrence Herman
Department of Biology
Allegheny College
Meadville, Pennsylvania

The LIBRARY COMMITTEE will meet on Thursday,

at 4 P.M. in the Library.

Paul W. Leser, Ch.

The President
The Dean

Mr. G. Hanson
Mrs. L. Hanson
Miss F. Sanford

Miss C. Cater
Mr. L. Herman
Mr. H. Hyde
Mr. G. Mabee

OLIVET COLLEGE

OLIVET, MICHIGAN

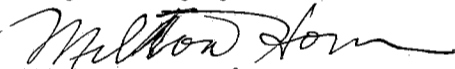
THE SCHOOL OF FINE ARTS

March 23,
1949

To Whom It May Concern:

Dr. Paul W. Leser has been a colleague of mine in the past two years. Under the Unified Study Plan of the College I have had the privilege of working in close collaboration with him, thereby having first hand observation of his work as a teacher and a scientist. And I have seen the results of his teaching on the students' outlook towards world problems and their scientific approach towards anthropological problems, and I dare say, that it has shown Dr. Leser to be a splendid teacher and a scientist of unquestionable integrity, to which the high order of his publications will attest. With all that he has the gift of being an excellent lecturer. I am proud to recommend him.

Very truly yours,



Milton Horn
Artist-in-Residence and
Professor of Art

Translation:

(COPY)

Public Museum of Ethnography

Stockholm, June 25th, 1940

Professor Dr. Gerhard Lindblom

Director

The undersigned confirms hereby that Dr. Paul Leser is an internationally well known ethnologist. He is well experienced as lecturer and professor and a very good pedagogue who gives important and interesting lectures and seminars. He has an agreeable personality of high moral standard.

It might be worth mentioning additionally that he is extremely well adjustable to new circumstances. During his short sojourn in Sweden he not only managed to read Swedish fluently but also to speak the language fluently and with very good pronunciation. Therefore it is real pleasure for me to recommend him as scientist as well as with regard to his personality. I have no doubt that his appointment to a university or a college would prove a decisive gain for these institutions.

Stockholm, June 25th, 1940

signed:

Gerhard Lindblom

Director of the Ethnographic Museum of Sweden.

RUBEL ASIATIC RESEARCH BUREAU, FOGG MUSEUM OF ART
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

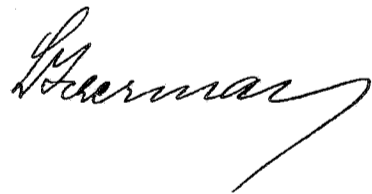
December 8th, 1942.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I have known Dr. Paul Leser for many years although there have been long periods of time between our meetings. I consider him one of the most capable contemporary ethnologist in every respect. Thoroughly trained at schools and universities in Europe in the field of ethnology he was able to specialize without bias and the proof of this lies in his book, which was published in 1931 as vol. III of the "Ethnologische Bibliothek des Anthropos". Its title is "Entstehung und Verbreitung des Pfluges" (The Origin of the Plough and the Spread of its Use). There are 700 pages full of important, illustrated material, and for a long time this book will remain the best standard work in this branch of the history of culture.

Besides theoretical knowledge he acquired practical skill in museum technique as well as teaching ability through his long stay in German and Swedish institutions.

May I add that Dr. Leser's character is absolutely reliable, and that his personality is most pleasant.



Dr. Lucian Scherman
Hanson, Mass.

PEIPING UNION MEDICAL COLLEGE

PEKING, CHINA

CENOZOIC RESEARCH LABORATORY

December 2, 1942

To Whom It May Concern:

I have known Dr. Paul Leser for many years, almost ever since he has been associated with the Ethnological Museum at Frankfort-on-Main. Although the field of my own interests was of quite a different kind, I came in close scientific connection with him in my capacity as President of the Frankfort Society of Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory. As such, I had also the opportunity to form a judgment on Doctor Leser's special abilities as teacher, lecturer and debater.

Doctor Leser's high qualifications as ethnologist became manifest above all in his standard work on the "Development and distribution of the plough". This book has been welcomed by experts all over the world as epoch-making in the field of the history of agricultural technique from the viewpoint of history of civilization and comparative ethnology. Doctor Leser's thoroughness in the collection of material, his familiarity with the methods of research related to the history of civilization, the reliability of his judgment and, last but not least, the significance of the results obtained, are particularly praised by the critics. By this and other studies Doctor Leser acquired a world-wide reputation as an authority in the special field of the history of agricultural implements in general.

Regarding Doctor Leser's abilities as teacher and lecturer, I am able to attest that he is a very clever and versatile speaker and debater, who knows how to elucidate difficult scientific problems in a manner intelligible also to the popular mind.

Dr. Franz Weidenreich

Dr. Franz Weidenreich
Director, Cenozoic Research Laboratory,
Peiping Union Medical College,
and National Geological Survey
of China

American Museum of Natural History
Central Park West at Seventy-ninth Street
New York City

CHINESE HISTORY PROJECT

LOW MEMORIAL LIBRARY
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NEW YORK CITY

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New York City

Tel. UNIVERSITY 4-3200, EXT. 593

December 2, 42.

DIRECTOR

KARL AUGUST WITTFOGEL

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

HOMER H. DUBS
Duke University
L. CARRINGTON GOODRICH
Columbia University
JAMES R. WARE
Harvard University
R. H. TAWNEY
London School of Economics

To Whom It May Concern.

I have followed Professor Paul Leser's scientific career since the time when the appearance of the "Pflug" directed the attention of European anthropology to its brilliant author. With this unique study Professor Leser at once stepped into the front-ranks of his science. My own experience in the field of oriental and comparative anthropology verified both the importance of his method and the value of his conclusions. This country is to be congratulated for having acquired the services of so excellent a scholar, who certainly will make a great contribution to American research work and teaching.

Sincerely,

Karl A. Wittfogel
Karl A. Wittfogel

Director

Chinese History Project

CHINESE HISTORY PROJECT
LOW MEMORIAL LIBRARY
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
NEW YORK CITY

December 2, 42

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