The founding of a University College in the British West Indies has given rise to serious thinking about the characteristic role of a University in societies such as these, whether in the training of professionals, the development of research, or in its less definite role in the crystallisation, criticism and transmission of current methods in the presentation, discussion, criticism and advocacy of these ideas and values. The Extra Mural Department's programmes of lectures and classes in the different Caribbean territories have been arranged to make the influence of the University felt in this latter sense. Recently the Extra Mural Department, in pursuit of these aims, started a programme of Local Research, the aim of which is the documentation and study by "lay-scholars" of significant aspects of the cultures and social histories of its diverse parts. In particular attention is being directed to folk culture. We feel justified in using the term folk culture since, although it has been shaped and given its functions by the total system of relations between the various sections of our societies, there is a sharp cleavage between the patterns of folk life and the standards emanating from super-structural (i.e. Colonial) institutions.

The Caribbean societies consist of a collection of island and littoral territories between North and South America, which in no sense constitute a socio-economic system. They have similar yet separate and individual relationships to different mother countries, on which they depend socially, economically, politically and culturally.

Nevertheless, on account of the similarity of economic and other relationships to the mother countries, and the interrelated historical development of the latter, they have been subject to the same or to similar historical forces, e.g. they have been colonial societies which developed after...
the destruction of the aboriginal societies; their basic social and economic unit has been the plantation; their labour force has been brought from Africa under the system of slavery; they have responded to the career of sugar-cane in the world market, and they have been subject to the radical transformation of the social structure by legislation, i.e. the emancipation of the slaves etc.

The societies have no traditional peasantry with developed crafts and a system of internal markets and no comprehensively institutionalised traditional structure of community organisation.

All the societies have a superstructure integrated with or derived from the institutions of the mother countries (legal, religious, political and educational, etc.) This superstructure consists of administrative machinery, official ecclesiastical organisations, legal systems, large and medium-sized economic concerns, linguistic and aesthetic norms, as well as a complex of prestigeful patterns of behaviour and attitudes, which are represented by an elite.

The life of the populace, mainly of African origin, is partially regulated by the institutions and norms of the superstructure, leaving nevertheless substantial areas of "folk culture" the patterns and norms of which are often at variance with those of the superstructure, and the institutions of which have not succeeded in acquiring stability, recognition or effective organisation beyond particular neighbourhoods or islands. This folk culture is differentiated in major respects from that of the superstructure, and in minor respects from one territory to another.

Social ranking systems are closely paralleled by ethnic differences thus serving to exaggerate the split between those who belong to the folk, and are Negro, and those who to a greater or lesser extent are able to identify with the norms of the superstructure, or the mother country itself.

The programme at present being carried out experimentally in the British West Indies is based on the assumption that there are a sufficient number of "lay scholars" in the community who, with guidance, are capable of doing reliable research. In the larger territories this is certainly the case. Particularly amongst the professional and technical occupations are to be found persons with the necessary training and sharpness of mind: with good University Degrees in social science or arts, musicians, draughtsmen, painters, potters, those with legal training, architects, lecturers in Training Colleges, librarians, extension workers etc. who clearly carry a variety of the skills and mental attitudes required for good field work.

Whether or not they can be mobilised, however, depends on the stage of cultural development of the individual society. Until recently the powerfully prevailing attitude of the class from which the lay-scholars come was hostile to any appreciative interest in folk culture, with its low-class, African, associations. Recent years, however, have produced a new minority attitude within this class in the larger territories, attributable to the growth of Afro- and Indo-national consciousness tinged with racism, to the manation of former prejudice amongst the better educated of the