Historians familiar with Bernard Knollenberg's work have long awaited the publication of this book, and they have not been disappointed. Careful, meticulous scholarship has produced an important work. After a masterfully condensed introduction in which he states his case, the author begins his narrative by relating the colonies to the realities of British politics, preparing the reader for the events to follow. It is the author's thesis that, "while the British Stamp Act . . . contributed to and touched off the colonial uprising of 1765-1766, the colonists had been brought to the brink of rebellion by a number of other provocative British measures from 1759 to 1764, most of which persisted after the Stamp Act was repealed in 1766 and contributed to the mounting colonial discontent culminating in the American Revolution" (page 1). After stating his position, Mr. Knollenberg leads his reader with a firm hand through the development of colonial grievances. He begins with imperial efforts to give the governor's instructions a force superior to law and to eradicate self-government in the colonies. The effects of this action were seen in Virginia in the Twopenny Act dispute, in Massachusetts in the disagreement concerning the Writs of Assistance, and in difficulties over the Electoral Law in South Carolina. Similar efforts to bring the colonies under closer supervision were evident in New York and New Jersey in efforts to reduce the tenure of supreme count justices from "good behavior" to "the pleasure of the crown." The activities of Thomas Seeker, Archbishop of Canterbury, designed to impose the Anglican Church and introduce an American bishop among dissenting colonists were evident causes for distrust of England in many quarters. Furthermore the favorable aspects of the settlement of the French and Indian War were soon overcome as colonists became aware that imperial authorities sought to enforce a whole series of acts restricting colonial trade in the interests of British Mercantilism while a military establishment remained in America not for the protection of the West but to keep the colonies submissive. Add to this the bungling and the failure of Amherst and the army which resulted in the Indian uprising
centering in western Virginia, New York, and Pennsylvania. Additional grievances were found in an unrealistic enforcement of the White Pine Acts and the Sugar Acts. Upon this scene of discontent and unrest came the Stamp Act upon which the colonists could focus all their mounting objections to their position within the empire.

In recounting this story, Mr. Knollenberg has marshalled new evidence along with old, and in the process he has laid to rest some persistent old myths. Generally his position is in reaction to the empire oriented historians who, beginning with George Louis Beer, sought to counteract patriotic claims that all British actions were evil. Now, in this most recent work, the emphasis is once again on the colonists who were suffering under British action, and on the blunders which came from London.

The work is masterfully documented, and not the least of its scholarly accomplishments is in the numerous appendices which clarify confusing problems and also establish some important historical points.

*Colorado State University*  
CARLOS R. ALLEN, JR.


This excellent and scholarly biography of Thomas Paine by Alfred Owen Aldridge, presently a professor of English at the University of Maryland, reminds the reader (if he needs reminding) that the American Revolution involved more than a political severance by the colonies from England but was a truly social and ideological conflict as well. As much as any other leader of the rebellious temper of the American colonies in the mid 1770’s and in a dramatic manner of life and expression which was uniquely his own, Paine represents the ideological spearhead of the American revolt against her colonial ties and goes on to fill in the negative of separation from the old with the positive of a new society consonant with his understanding of the principles of 18th century rationalism and liberalism.

Paine was wholly a self-made man and rose from depths of social obscurity which no other important leader of the American