

nalistic pride, the feeling of being unique and privileged. It contributed to the nation's unity by evoking the glorious past and sketching a great historic mission that became the fate of American nation.

After more or less forty years of general acceptance of the Turner hypothesis there came a wave of criticism. The shock of Great Depression aroused interest in urban and industrial aspects of the country's development, and called for the revision of the frontier hypothesis. The interpretation of history in terms of an area of free land seemed out of date in the world dominated by developing industries. The glorification of frontier individualism did not fit the time when the class struggle gained strength and optimism of pioneers could no longer be shared by the nation struck by economic crisis. Free lands were no longer present and with them waned the belief in their ameliorating influence. Under such conditions the frontier thesis became the target of attacks of historians, economists, social scientists. Yet, the hypothesis did not lose its power of appeal totally. Most ardent supporters of Turner were still ready to defend his case. Resolving the frontier controversy became, as one historian called it, "the main professional obligation of the times"<sup>34/</sup>.