

Chapter 19: Technological Advances and Economics in the Global Age: 19-5 Conclusion  
Book Title: The Earth and Its Peoples: A Global History 7th Edition Update, AP® Edition  
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## 19-5 Conclusion

The industrialized world experienced a flood of new inventions—automobiles, electric lights, radios, movies, airplanes—that stimulated not only a broader respect for science, but also an expectation that science would continue indefinitely to improve human lives. This was the cult of the modern. Technology even affected the arts, providing new materials for architecture and furniture design, new electronic means of amplifying and distributing music, and an ever-expanding array of tools for making and reproducing images, both still and moving. Yet the devastating human tragedies of war and depression also encouraged currents of nihilism, despair, and questioning of faith.

While participating in many of these changes, the nonindustrialized nations also had their own technological breakthroughs, such as the rickshaw, and did not use some inventions, such as electricity, in the same way as the West. New media such as cinema and radio were used in different ways as well and sometimes perpetuated themes and images from local cultural sources. At the same time, traditional patterns of village life began to erode as cities grew and urban life, at least for the privileged classes, took on the demeanor and attitudes of Europe. But becoming like Europe did not mean coming to like Europe.

The world was altered by economic growth and globalization, by population growth and movement, and by technological and environmental change. Led by the postwar recovery of the industrial powers and the remarkable economic expansion of Japan, the Asian Tigers, and more recently China, the world economy grew dramatically until the global recession of 2008. The development and application of new technology contributed significantly to this process. International markets were more open and integrated than at any other time. However, not all the nations of the world benefited from the new wealth and exciting technologies of the postwar era. The capitalist West and a handful of Asian nations grew richer and more powerful, while most of the world's nations remained poor.

This period also witnessed the beginning of the international environmental movement. Public attention increasingly focused on resource management, pollution, and the preservation of endangered species. In response, the United States and governments in western Europe put in place the first generation of environmental laws. The Clean Air Act in the United States and other measures had an immediate impact, but both policymakers and the public grew aware of ever more serious challenges. The gas crisis of the 1970s gave these efforts a sense of urgency.

At the same time, new technologies and the wealth produced by economic expansion have allowed the world's richest nations to implement ambitious programs of environmental protection. As a result, pollution produced by automobiles and factories has actually

declined in the richest nations. The question that remains is whether rapidly developing nations, such as Brazil, China, and India, will move more quickly than the mature industrial nations did to introduce these new technologies and curtail threats to the environment like global warming.

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