economy controlled by the government. An important point of consideration during this time was the unemployment rates, which never rose above 3% at its worst. Britain was continuing down the road to success with high employment and even female workers continuing with jobs they had started during the war. Perhaps due to this, there was also a boom in the chemical and nuclear industries and a nationalisation of other industries, such as gas in 1949, the Bank of England in 1946 and the railways in 1948. These industries, which had recovered better generally after the war compared to countries such as Germany and France, boomed and continued over the period. Yet the denationalisation of many of the nationalised industries by the Conservatives when they returned in 1951 suggested that the industries had not been doing as well as they had hoped. Despite AJP Taylor’s description of them as a “decisive jump from the nineteenth into the twentieth century” there have also been many criticisms. Corelli Barnett suggests that the lack of “direct incentive” and the “over-full employment” did not benefit the country at all. However, it must be noted that Barnett is recognised as a very right wing historian and so is likely to support the decisions made by the right wing parties (like the Conservatives) and oppose the more socialist policies of the Labour government. In this manner, it must also be considered that AJP Taylor may also have reduced reliability as, writing from the 1965 mark, in a book covering itself with a wider, broader history of the country, he may be susceptible to personal bias and may not concentrate entirely on the economy in his work. Whilst the industries boomed, however, the other side of the argument stands that, in the long run, a nuclear and chemical industry caused countless problems during other conflicts, and the increase in some industries meant a decrease in the old, traditional industries such as shipbuilding and textiles. On the whole, however, the industrial situation for Britain is painted rather positively, with high employment and more available jobs to the citizens of Britain.

A key point concerning this time period and its economic progress and constraints is the much debated topic of loans, the majority of which were contracted through negotiations with the United States of America. The cause of much of this debate is whether, despite the benefits the loans gave, whether they were worth it on the whole, in the long term scheme of things. The war debts had risen increasingly by 1945 and stood at £5 billion (an increase of £3000 million in the 6 years since 1939.) This was a substantial large amount of money during this era, and whilst the country still needed to repay this debt, more were collected and accumulated over the following years. By 1945 also, gave way to the Keynes-secured loan of £3750 million at a 2% interest to be repaid after 1951. The short term progress was evident in the well managed labour and aims the Labour government had, hoping to place much of the money in the increasing welfare schemes. However, when the time came to repay the debt, Britain was still in decline and there had been many alterations to the hopes for plans such as council house targets had not reached their goal by 200,000 houses, education had been virtually forgotten and amendments had been made to Bevan’s much loved NHS, enough to spur his resignation. Also, under Dalton’s aims, as Chancellor, a loan was agreed and exports to the USA were increased, as well as decreasing imports to Britain. In this manner, it is evident that there were aims in place to attempt controlling Britain’s economic system and the ministers at the time were doing what was possible to maintain a good society. However, Corelli Barnett refers to this dependency on US loans as “an entirely artificial environment.” Stating that “US and Commonwealth help in the form of Lend-lease and Sterling Area Credit” he continues to suggest that “there was no internal competition in the British home market.” By stressing this “artificial” economy, it is clear that Barnett feels the dependency on the loans was not a success for Britain in the long term and the short term similar to his description of the welfare state, he suggests that there was “no spur to efficiency” and that this environment was “made possible by American aid.” Whilst there is some evidence to support this, such as the struggle to balance repayment of debts and the crisis at home, it may also be suggested that it was a good idea to take out loans from America at the time. The 1947 crisis year was unforeseen, and many other problems that arose during these years may also have been mishaps that had not been predicted. Therefore, it may have seemed, during 1945, that it would be possible to compromise payment to America and success at home. Andrew Marr rejects the notion that the loans from the USA continued to aid the country, by stating that “Britain did not have enough dollars to feed the country.” On the whole, however, there seems to be much agreement that the long term problems of the loans contracted from the United States outweighed the short-term benefits, and that it may have been wiser to make realistic goals during the early post-war years without more debt to repay.