It's back to reality as the Olympic shine starts to wear off; Columnist.

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SO now the Olympic caravan has packed up for Brazil in four years, Britain gets back to normal. All the stories that we missed in the wall-to-wall sports coverage are now popping back up.

And my delight in the tolerant and generous face that we showed as a country in the Olympic fortnight is slowly giving way to exasperation with the face of Britain represented by the coalition Government.

Like doomed Bourbon kings, they appear incapable of learning and incapable of forgetting, intent on dragging us all down with them.

And if when I talk about the coalition I don't mention the Liberal Democrats, I'm just reflecting who holds the whip hand in today's Government.

We've seen once more their total inability to learn what the public want with the coming U-turn on rail fares. With mass protests against yet another inflation busting price rise for commuters, they still haven't learned that the British people do value good public services over free market dogma.

At the same time, even the new generation seem unable to forget these failed old dogmas. In particular, they seem to find it hard to forget an ingrained hatred of workers.

I was flabbergasted to read of a new collection of essays from leading Conservative Thinkers to be launched for the autumn conference, entitled Britannia Unchained: Global Growth and Prosperity.

Already drawing a huge amount of criticism for their baseless allegations, they seem to revel in laying the blame for our economic problems - caused, if you remember, by really bad bank practices - squarely at the doors of the workers.

Early reports suggest that they will argue that Britons are the laziest people in the world, working the shortest weeks, with the least entrepreneurial drive and willingness to work.

They dust off tired old plans for cutting basic workplace protections in the name of unleashing entrepreneurial dynamism. But if their idea goes further than bringing the worst of China's sweatshops back to Europe, then sadly I haven't read of any concrete plans.

The book is a straightforward piece of lazy class war trying to drag us back to the cap-doffing deferential days of yore. The underlying message is that workers are cut from a different cloth to the honourable bosses, naturally lazy spongers who are mollycoddled by regulations.

We must not fall prey to these idiots' siren calls with simple-minded 'solutions' to deep-seated British problems. A generation ago, one of the last generation of leading Tory thinkers, John Redwood, published his manifesto for change, Going For Broke: Gambling With Taxpayers' Money.

A more wrong-headed analysis is hard to find. His diagnosis then for Britain's perennial lack of entrepreneurial spirit and dynamism was wholesale privatisation.
Removing the dead hand of the state would unleash an irresistible tide of innovation which would make Britain a leading high skill, high wage economy.

We now know where that got us. Redwood was 180 degrees wrong; privatisation was simple revenge against groups that seldom voted Conservative, destroying their livelihoods forever. Removing the dead hand of the state from the railways led to profiteering and chaos. Today, we have to throw increasing amounts of taxpayers' and commuters' money to hold an ailing system with almost no accountability to public or government.

I sincerely hope that the reports of the book are a misunderstanding of the sort that crop up in August's 'silly season'.

But looking the Conservative's past attitudes to the North East industries makes me think that once more, the joke's on us.