

The Siege of Union Street
By:Alistair Hulett

You should have seen us
Down at Erko, Fourteenth August, Saturday night.
To Newtown, Stanmore, Enmore, and Petersham,
Calls went out, "Workers, unite!"
We built a bloody great wall
With planks and boards built seven foot tall.
We didn't mind the howling rain and sleet,
When we stood 'round the fire at Union Street.

The man at the shop said, "Put it on tick."
The kids came around with bottles and bricks.
There was Irish stew and homemade lemonade.
They were grand old days on the barricade.

I never thought I would join a Party,
Carry a card, or see things "Red."
The sight of barefoot children
Crying out on the pavement turned my head.
Their old man's over in France,
Flapping like a rag on a barbed wire fence.
Their Mum does what she can to make ends meet.
And she's down at the siege of Union Street.

The man at the shop said, "Put it on tick."
The kids came around with bottles and bricks.
There was Irish stew and homemade lemonade.
They were grand old days on the barricade.

The cops came down, and they came down hard;
They must have been five hundred strong.
They called us "Reds," and they cracked our heads
To teach us poor sinners right from wrong.
I learned a lesson that night:
It's all out war when you stand and fight.
I saw those brisk young coppers on their beat
Behave like thugs in Union Street.

The man at the shop said, "Put it on tick."
The kids came around with bottles and bricks.
There was Irish stew and homemade lemonade.
They were grand old days on the barricade.

Sunlight danced on the broken glass;
It shown like diamonds as morning broke.
The cops were back by the railroad track.
And the streets were filled with working folk.
They'd bashed us bloody and raw,
But it forced Jack Lang to change the law.
And now the landlords have to cop it sweet.
And the Red Flag flies in Union Street.

The man at the shop gave licorice sticks
To the kids who cleaned up the bottles and bricks.
Down the years, those mem'ries never fade
Of the grand old days on the barricade.

They were grand old days,
They were grand old days,
They were grand old days
On the barricade.