

*The little man who wasn't
there is in again*

"And the Night Shall Be Filled . . ."

By Don Rose

From his column "Stuff and Nonsense" in The Evening Bulletin

NOW that the season is well past for singing about "silent night," it may be permissible to point out that it isn't. Night is not loudly noisy, but the smaller sounds of the night can be deafening. That is why there are circles under my eyes.

"The night shall be filled with music," said Longfellow. But it isn't music. It's a medley of mysterious noises, most of them insisting that a man get out of bed and discover what they are. Longfellow had another line, telling how he "heard the trailing of garments of the night sweep through her marble halls." Very poetic stuff, but did he ever hear cautious footsteps creeping up the stairs at 3:30 in the morning and go forth to find nobody there?

At 3:30 in the morning human courage is probably at its lowest ebb, but never shall it be said that I failed to protect sleeping women and children from prowlers by night. I did wish for something handy in the way of weapons. A hand grenade would do, or a sawed-off shotgun.

I'd march boldly out into the hall, armed with nothing and wearing not much more. The house is black as the pit and there's nobody in the

hall, nobody on the stairs, nobody anywhere. I lock all the doors so that nobody can get in. Comes the thought that if anybody is in already, I've locked him in. That's a cheerful thought to go back to sleep on. I'm not going to sleep. Nobody could sleep in this uproar.

The electric clock in the living room is thumping like a frightened heart. A spigot is leaking somewhere and it sounds like a steam hammer driving piles for a subway. What's that? Somebody turned over in bed upstairs and it sounded as though the roof were falling in.

The thing to do is to keep calm. All these are normal noises, easily explained by a few moment's reflection. That dull thud outside wasn't a dead body falling off the porch, but a broken branch dropping from the maple tree. Give me time and I'll figure out that faint gasping, like an old-fashioned gas engine. It might, for instance, be somebody dying horribly in the woods beyond the garden.

"Most glorious night, thou wert not sent for slumber!" said Byron, and I think he's got something. I'll give up and take a nap in the afternoon, when everything is quiet.

Stirrings in Spain

By Victor Serge

From his column in *The New Leader*

SINCE the meeting of the Spanish Cortes in Mexico in November, there have been several new developments with regard to the problems with which it dealt. News from Spain indicates increased activity of the underground movement. At Barcelona *Solidaridad Obrera*, the organization of the syndicalists, held a conference in which resolutions were passed condemning the maneuvers of the Communists and supporting the Government-in-exile of José Giral. In Spain there have been violent encounters between members of the National Federation of Labor (C.N.T.) and the Communists.

Of special interest is the fact that the Falangists have become so much alarmed that they have entered into negotiations with the underground. High ranking officers (among them a general who became famous during the civil war) have been holding conferences with representatives of the republican workers. The military leaders are planning for a transition government and are trying to obtain pledges that there will be no uprising of the people. The chief concern in government circles is to provide for the escape from Spain of some 15,000 Fascists who have reason to fear the popular wrath. This effort is sufficient to prove the weakness of the government estab-

lished with the support of Mussolini and Hitler.

An active young leader of the C. N.T. has lately come from Spain and joined the Giral Cabinet. This man, José Leyva, after having been condemned to death, passed four years in Franco prisons. Now he has been officially commissioned by the National Alliance of Democratic Forces to represent them in the new government. Since he left Spain in September, his account of conditions is up-to-date and authentic.

Here is the picture presented by José Leyva. He estimates that there are still 70,000 prisoners in Spanish jails; 7,000 of these are in Madrid: 380,000 republicans live under close police surveillance. Thousands of partisans are hidden in the mountains. They are well-organized but lack the arms which would make them an efficient fighting force.

The National Alliance of Democratic Forces includes the two great labor federations, the C.N.T. and the U.G.T., the Socialist party, the two republican parties and the two Catalan liberal republican groups. It contains enough trade unions, political and national minority groups to assure control of the national life during a transitional period. "The Spanish Communist party," said José Leyva, "and the phantom Supreme Junta, of which we had never