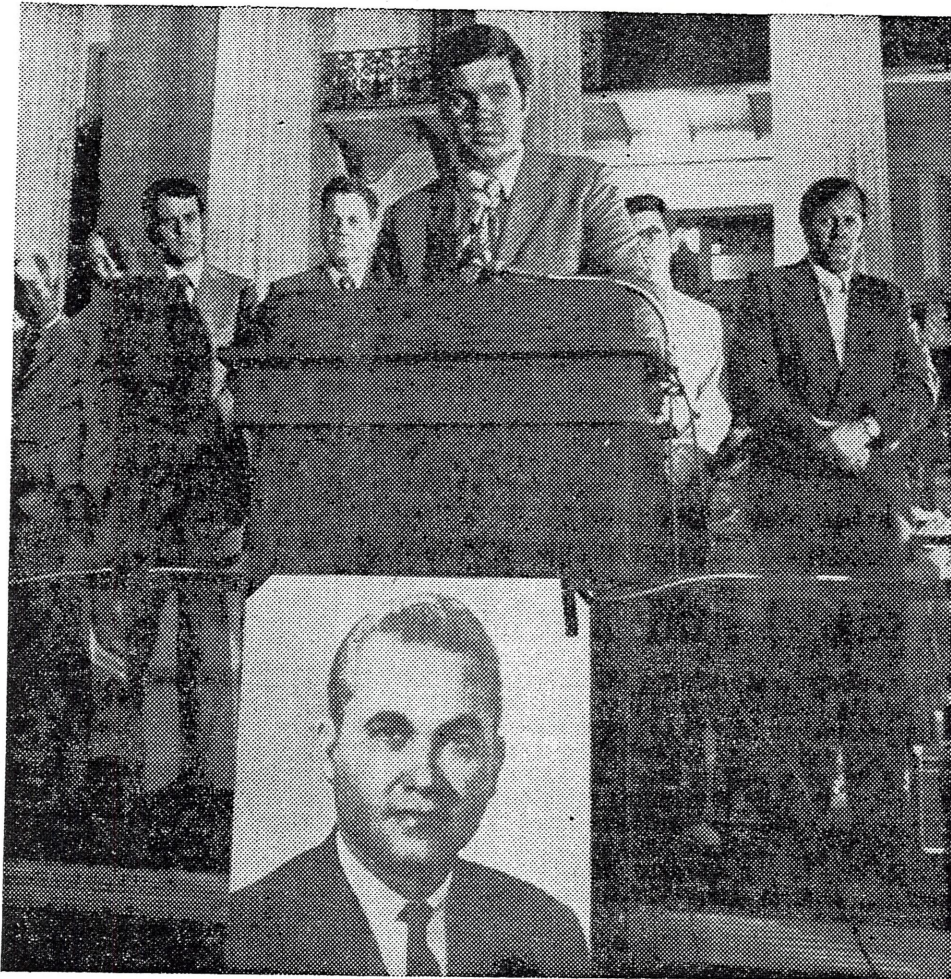


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VIGIL AT THE CAPITOL: Lieut. Gov. Jere L. Beasley of Alabama offering a silent prayer for Governor Wallace in Montgomery. With him is group of State officials.

Prayers and Tears in Alabama Capital

By **JON NORDHEIMER**

Special to The New York Times

MONTGOMERY, Ala., May 15—When the word reached Montgomery today that Gov. George C. Wallace had been shot in Maryland, the news cut through the hazy May day like a cold rain.

Secretaries in the old gray State Capitol cried at their desks and men gathered in tight circles outside the oak-paneled Governor's office and talked in muted tones about plots and intrigue.

Violence Deplored

This had been Governor Wallace's town for eight of the last 10 years, a capital he dominated with a style that electrified his followers and galvanized his detractors, and it suddenly seemed empty without him.

A thousand or more state office workers and citizens attended a prayer service on

the steps of the capitol at dusk and heard several state officials deplore the act of violence that had struck down the Governor.

"It is a sad occasion for Alabama and for all America," said Lieut. Gov. Jere L. Beasley. "George Wallace is a friend of all of us."

But there was also an element not saddened by the shooting, a reaction that evoked memories of the polarization that had fixed Alabamians during the Wallace era.

In Huntsville, Ala., Dr. John L. Cashin Jr., leader of the predominantly black National Democratic Party of Alabama, said in a statement:

"The shooting of George Wallace is not only an outrageous atrocity, it will give George Wallace the mantle of aggrieved respectability that he needs in his quest for ultimate power. I condemn the

action of the would-be assassin and those who sympathize with his deed as both misguided and unspeakably foolish as well as politically unenlightened."

Word of the shooting reached Mr. Wallace's national headquarters here in a telephone call from a staff worker in Maryland to Charles Snider, the national chairman.

'Everything Stopped'

"Suddenly, everything stopped," said Joe Azbell, a campaign coordinator. "The girls stopped typing and had tears in their face and no one said anything for a long time."

"This was the work of one man," Mr. Azbell said later in referring to the shooting of Mr. Wallace. "One man, maybe two, did this. This was not a symptom of a sick society or a reflection on a single city or state."