In Focus

Wallace's Organization

By JULES WITCOVER

MONTGOMERY — It's well
off the beaten path, there are no
campaign signs out front, and
there isn't even a name on the
door of the main reception
room. But the switchboard oper-
ator answers "Wallace cam-
paign" to each phone call and —
more important — the postman
knows where to deliver the
mail.

Every weekday since early
this spring, when George C.
Wallace sent out his first news-
letter to the names on his large
and ever-growing list of support-
ers, the letters have been com-
ing back, with checks in them.

In one room of a small new
two-story office building in
Montgomery's southern out-
skirts, a young girl methodically
opens the letters and sorts out
the checks, recording name and
address of each sender.

It is more or less a
continuation of what happened in oth-
er Wallace campaign headquar-
ters when he was, first, thinking
about running for President in
1967, and then, running in 1968.
The mail volume has dropped
off somewhat, but that is to be
expected; the surprising thing is
that the checks continue to
come in at all to a man who lost
so emphatically last November.

The main stimulus is the Wal-
lace newsletter, the third of
which currently is in prepara-
tion.

Thus, six months after his
unsuccessful third-party effort
to throw the 1968 Presidential el-
action into the House of Repre-
sentatives, George Corley Wal-
lace is alive and well, and living
in hope of greater glory.

The presidential candidate of
the American Independent party
isn't saying what that greater
 glory might be — another run at
the White House in 1972, or
even, less likely, a bid for a sec-
ond term as governor of Ala-
abama next year.

But unlike other losers in the
past, Wallace hasn't turned to
the practice of law or some oth-
er mundane endeavor to put
bread on the table. He's working
fulltime to keep his "move-
ment" going, and from all out-
ward signs, he's doing a fair job
of it and not starving in the
process.

Wallace insists he's just keep-
ing in touch with what President
Nixon is doing before deciding
whether his troops will have to
be rallied again. With a pen-
chant for seeing victory in de-
feat that would make the Man
of La Mancha blanch, Wallace
says his 1968 race forced both
parties over toward himself, but
he's watching to see if the trend
holds up.

This interlude of reconnaiss-
ance is convenient. It gives Wal-
lace's organization a chance to
get settled in for the long pull,
and permits a fresher set of tar-
gets to accumulate. In the
meantime, Wallace is making
few speeches and granting no
formal interviews. He will,
though, talk long and easily with
a visitor as long as intimidating
pad and pencil are not pro-
duced.

Although Wallace insists he
has no plans to seek any public
office at present, there can be
little doubt that his interest in
keeping a third-party effort
going is personal, not historical
nor philosophical. He has no in-
terest in developing the kind of
gress-roots structure that really
can cement a party — through
the election of local, county, and
state officials.

IT'S THE direction of the na-
ton that the folks in the "move-
ment" are concerned about, and
in Wallace's view — and self-in-
terest — it takes a national
campaign to affect that direc-
tion.

Wallace doesn't even demon-
strate much interest in Alabama
politics now, suggesting that
he's risen above that and has no
taste for a fight against Gov.
Albert Brewer, the young lieu-
tenant governor who succeeded
Mrs. Wallace and who has al-
ready announced he'll seek a
term on his own next year.

It is a special tonic for Wal-
lace when folks from out-of-state
come to Montgomery and man-
age to find him at his new out-
of-the-way office. This is the
waiting time, but even a morn-
ing's visit with the 1968 presi-
dential candidate of the Ameri-
can Independent Party makes it
clear that there still is plenty of
running in him yet.