

Downtown Merchants Parade To Protest World Trade Center

By EDITH EVANS ASBURY

Irate operators of small businesses on the west side in downtown Manhattan began a "survival" campaign yesterday with picketing, a mock funeral procession and the collection of signatures on a protest petition.

The demonstration was staged on Cortlandt, Dey and Liberty Streets to oppose the razing of the area for the construction of a World Trade Center by the Port of New York Authority.

Picket signs and a loudspeaker proclaimed that the Port Authority had no right to condemn private property for the center, which they said would result in profits for private individuals.

Representatives of 1,325 enterprises facing eviction said that they would carry their case to the U. S. Supreme Court if necessary. They have already challenged the authority's right to condemn the area in State Supreme Court, where a decision is pending.

Investigation Urged

The merchants also called for an investigation into the reasons for switching the center to the West Side from the site originally selected on the East Side of downtown Manhattan.

They said certain real estate operators had advance information about the switch, and bought property facing the new site before it was announced to the public.

Oscar Nadel, president of the Downtown West Businessmen's Association, said that employers and workers in the area had pledged \$100,000 to fight the project.

"This project is to benefit banks, insurance companies, brokers, people dealing in inter-

national trade," Mr. Nadel declared. "Why should the Port Authority put us out of business for something like that?"

The loudspeaker blared to passers-by that the Port Authority planned to build "office buildings and a hotel for revenue, with no benefit to the taxpayers."

The recorded speech, which was constantly repeated, urged pedestrians to sign the petition in order to "stave off the forces of injustice to working people of this area."

A Black-Draped Coffin

A black-draped coffin containing the life-size figure of a man labeled "Small Business Man" was carried along the streets in a procession.

Mr. Nadel said that the 325 store-level businesses and 1,000 above-street-level businesses employed more than 30,000 persons who would be thrown out of work if the buildings were razed.

His association consists largely of radio and electronics shop owners, but also includes retailers of clothing, hardware, gifts, jewelry, stationery, garden supplies and restaurants.

Mr. Nadel said that it was ridiculous to believe the Port Authority's promise that merchants on the site could move into the World Trade Center.

"It will take five years to build it," he said. "What do they think will happen to our businesses while they are building?"