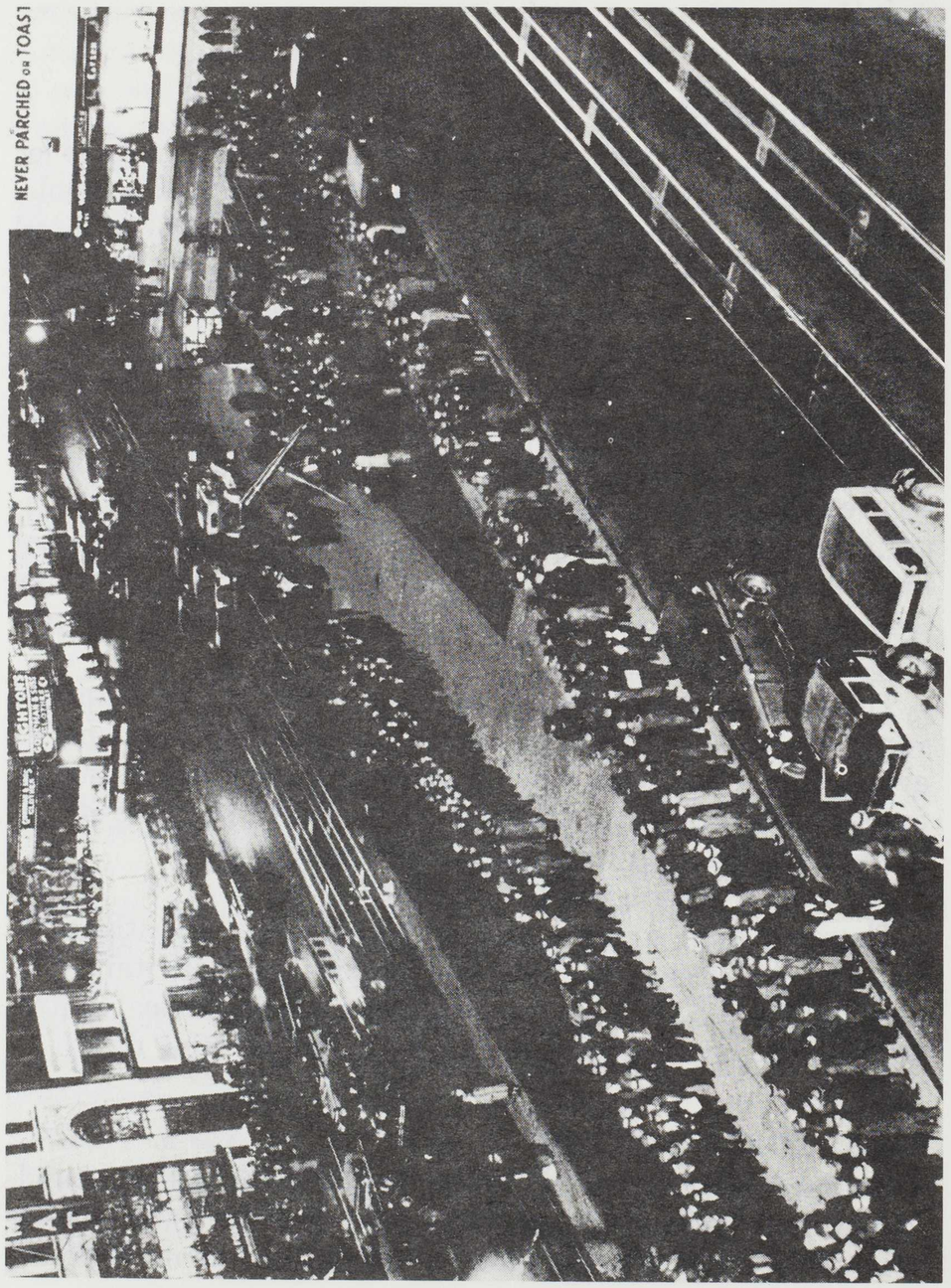

Many in the ruling class are asking themselves: Will there be another economic catastrophe of the dimensions of the 1929 debacle? Left, a 1932 bread line in New York City's Times Square.

sustaining such an unbridled military posture has been slowly but surely eroding.

The current economic crisis will surely accelerate and continue the erosion. The malady, however, goes much deeper than the current crisis, nor did it spring into existence with the pronouncement of the Carter Doctrine.

Unlike Britain in the 1930s, **the U.S. has no fallback position,** a fact which both the political and economic planners at the summits of the capitalist establishment cannot but be deeply aware.

A few years after the Second World War, the U.S. was the economic and military leader of world imperialism. It was the unquestioned dominant power in world affairs and it had attained virtually supreme political and military hegemony over the bourgeois world and the dependent, underdeveloped countries and oppressed peoples in the orbit of the world imperialist system.

At that time, in the early 1950s, the U.S. was responsible for more than 50% of the world's gross production. At the beginning of the 1960s, the U.S. share of the world's gross production had diminished somewhere in the neighborhood of 35%. Today, according to the best estimates, it is between 25-27%.

WEAKENS GEOPOLITICAL POSITION

Were the gross national product of the U.S. produced for human use and not for profit, it would be more than sufficient to satisfy the great needs of the population of the U.S. and then some. But production for purposes of capitalist profit, which entails competition for capitalist markets and sources of raw materials, poses an entirely different set of circumstances and inevitably brings into play the geopolitical position of the U.S. From that point of view the relative position of the U.S. as a world power becomes tremendously weakened. It means, for instance, that in the event of any serious military struggle, the adversary, whether it be the imperialist rivals or the socialist countries, may have access to a portion of three-quarters of the world's total production.

Just as significantly, the U.S.'s relative share of the world's gross product will continue to decline as the productive forces in