

# COMMUNISTS MEET WITHOUT DENNIS

Secretary, Said to Be Ill, Is  
Replaced by Hall to Give  
Convention Address

By HARRY SCHWARTZ

A top American Communist yesterday placed President Eisenhower and Premier Khrushchev on a par as symbols of "the thaw in the 'cold war' and of peace."

The leader, Gus Hall, expressed that opinion in a press conference before he gave the keynote speech at the seventeenth convention of the Communist party. The convention, which is scheduled to last four days, opened at the Theresa Hotel in Harlem.

In his address, however, Hall was less laudatory of President Eisenhower. While praising the President's proposal for an exchange of visits with Premier Khrushchev, he declared that that action would not mean the end of the "cold war."

Reporters were barred from the convention, but a party spokesman, Arnold Johnson, the national legislative director, said that close to the expected number of 225 delegates had arrived by afternoon.

Hall, who is Midwest secretary of the party, told reporters that Eugene Dennis, the party secretary and scheduled keynoter, was ill.

The Senate Internal Security subcommittee questioned Dennis last Monday in Washington about reports that he was marked for downgrading at the convention and that Hall had been drumming up support for a "dump-Dennis" move. Dennis refused to answer the questions on constitutional grounds. Hall denied he sought to displace Dennis.

He declared that the Commu-



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**REPLACES DENNIS: Gus Hall, Midwest secretary of U. S. Communist party, during news conference at Hotel Theresa. He delivered keynote address at opening meeting in place of Eugene Dennis, party secretary.**

nist party reached the low point in its fortunes a year ago and now was gaining steadily in morale and numbers. The present membership will be announced during the convention when the organization committee makes its report. Hall professed not to know the membership total, but said that published estimates of 3,000 were too low.