

First seat in
parliament for
the Hungarian
opposition

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Susan Viets in Budapest

THE Hungarian opposition has won its first seat in parliament in more than 40 years, but the polls were so low that two of the four byelections fought at the weekend were declared invalid.

In a third, no candidate obtained a clear majority, and these three byelections will be repeated soon.

Opposition candidates led the vote in three of the districts, but Hungarian elections are only declared valid if more than half the electorate turns out.

In Godollo, a city 20 miles north-east of Budapest, Mr Gabor Roszik of the HDF was voted into parliament with nearly 70 per cent of the vote. Mr Roszik's candidacy was supported by the League of Free Democrats and the Youth Movement, FIDESZ, both influential groups.

Of great concern to all parties, however, is voter apathy. Some analysts say many people were away from home, in the countryside because of the hot summer weather.

The Communist and opposition parties are busy hammering out programmes for the national elections due early next year, which are bound to attract more voter interest.

Mr Rezso Nyers, the Communist Party president, and Mr Karoly Grosz, the general-secretary, are off to Moscow this week for talks with the Soviet President, Mr Mikhail Gorbachev.

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