

Greens ready for poll

20-11-89 Pg 5

Susan Viets in Budapest

THE Hungarian Green party held its founding congress this weekend in Budapest and says it is set to field candidates in the upcoming parliamentary election.

The 200 members gathered together to elect a 15-person leadership and endorse a draft programme based on the general principle of environmental protection. A more detailed programme as well as an election manifesto are to be elaborated in the near future.

The women's lobby is strong and a system of positive discrimination was accepted which will ensure that one of every two delegates sent from the district to the National Council will be a woman. A founding member, Ms Zsuzsa Beres, said: "It was a fight but this will be a party with a high profile for women."

Members called for the resig-

nation of officials in the Ministry of Environment responsible for a project to build the huge Bos-Nagymaros power complex on the Danube river, which was recently abandoned by Parliament.

Despite this grassroots victory an advance pamphlet states that the Green Party was founded because "environmental associations are unable to assert the interests of environmental protection at the national level".

Several of Hungary's opposition groups have environmental sections, but the Greens feel that Hungary is ready for a national party devoted to ecological issues.

Air pollution is a major problem and emissions from Hungary's notorious Trabant cars are one factor in raising lead levels to more than 40 times the acceptable level in some parts of Budapest.

Now that more than 40 opposition groups, many with con-

fusingly similar names, exist in Hungary, the Greens will have one advantage at the polls: their environmentalism will give them a distinctive political profile.

● Members of the Budapest branch of Romania Libera, an organisation run by Romanian refugees, are camped outside the Romanian embassy on an eight-day hunger strike in protest against the forthcoming Romanian Party Congress.

Mr Emil Iovanescu, one of the five hunger-strikers, said they are protesting "the comedy, the so-called democratic election of Ceausescu by the 14th Party Congress".

The hunger-strikers say they are buoyed by recent changes in Eastern Europe but fear there is little hope of reform in Romania where the Ceausescu family is well-entrenched.

"We have no Krenz or Mladenov. I fear that if change comes, it will be violent," said Mr Iovanescu.

Reproduced with permission from the *Guardian*

20 November 1989