

Hungary's radicals threaten to break away in power bid

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in Budapest

THE gloves came off in earnest here last night at the key congress of Hungary's ruling party, with the radical reform wing threatening to break away unless it gained a clean sweep of the leadership of the new Hungarian Socialist Party.

A fierce row erupted over the issue of the establishment of new party cells in the workplace, bringing the new party's leading reformers into conflict with Mr Rezso Nyers, the Hungarian leader.

Mr Nyers asserted that the new party should be allowed to continue the practices of its Communist predecessor by having the right, subject to parliamentary approval, of organising in the workplace — for many a symbol of the old Communist system of control and a prime objection of the opposition in its negotiations with the party over the transition to a multi-party system.

Mr Nyers' proposal was carried by the congress, but the radical reformist troika of Mr Imre Pozsgay, the Prime Minister, Mr Miklos Nemeth, and the Foreign Minister, Mr Gyula Horn, all voted against in an early sign of the differences emerging between them and Mr Nyers' centrist course following what was widely seen as a

compromise on Saturday between the opposing forces in setting up the new party.

The reformers on the right are disappointed at Saturday's events which saw Mr Nyers seeking to avert a split and to accommodate a wide plurality of views within the new party. Yesterday, the right signalled that it would only back Mr Nyers for the leadership of the new party if it gained total control of the party praesidium.

The reformers were thought to have majority support among the delegates but in last night's vote only 104 of the 1,200 delegates voted with the leading troika against Mr Nyers.

The prospect of further fragmentation deepened when Mr Robert Ribanszki, a leader of the fundamentalist Communist wing, stated he was not prepared to accept the new Socialist party and would seek to rally the grass roots to maintain the existence of the old Communist Party. Another small, left-wing group the Janos Kadar Society, voiced similar intentions.

The new praesidium, expected to be 21-strong and to be elected on a list system today, had to be "homogeneous" said Mr Pozsgay. A close ally of his, Mr Csaba Tabajdi, said there was a serious threat of the right splitting from the new party unless it got its way. Mr Pozsgay's wing would back Mr Nyers to retain the lead-

ership of the new party, Mr Tabajdi said, but only on condition that the Nyers' list for the body was solidly reformist.

There was no question of the reformers accepting a "mixed" list, one that one reflect the plurality of platform represented at the congress.

The row over the workplace issue heightened fears that the right would split and also indicated the extent of the new party's reluctance to give up the levers of power, despite on Saturday having been the first of the traditionally ruling parties of the Warsaw Pact to abandon Communism.

Under the reformers' plan, the leading members of the praesidium would be Mr Nyers, Mr Nemeth, Mr Pozsgay and Mr Horn. In this scenario, Mr Nyers would be a transitional leader giving way at a later date to Mr Nemeth.

"There can be no compromise on the new praesidium," said Mr Tabajdi. "The majority of the reform platform will only accept Nyers if he makes no compromises in his list."

Much speculation centred yesterday on the future activities of the former Communist leader, Mr Karoly Grosz, and on another leading hardliner, Mr Janos Berecz.

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