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FULL TEXT OF ARTICLE:

1. [Article by Bjarne Nitovuori: "There Are No Parties in Estonia"]

2. [Text] Tartu-One year after the new Estonia's first democratic parliamentary elections, it is not yet possible to speak of a stable constellation of parties.

3. "There really are no political parties in Estonia. The ones that exist are very young, and they exist only in the parliament in Tallinn and to some extent in Tartu, but not at all in the rural areas," says Vahur Kalmre, editor in chief of the Tartu newspaper POSTIMEES and one of Estonia's foremost political analysts.

4. For example, when the Social Democratic Party's leader, Minister of Social Affairs Marju Lauristin, is active in Tartu, so is the Social Democratic Party. But now she spends 99 percent of her time in Tallinn.

5. Political expert Rein Taagepera, who is a professor at Tartu University, also feels that parties in the true sense do not yet exist in Estonia-instead, what exists are groups surrounding strong personalities. According to Taagepera, this is because there are not really any social classes.

6. He also feels that the division into government parties and opposition parties in the current parliament is artificial. That kind of classification works only in a two-party system.

7. In a multiparty system, parties that are not in the government can be either opposition parties or neutral. But in Estonia, Edgar Savisaar tried to unite all the noncoalition parties in an opposition bloc. Doing so involved cooperation with Estonia's Citizens Party and

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its leader, Juri Toomepuu. That was one reason why Taagepera left Savisaar's Center Party in April. But just a year ago, Taagepera was the presidential candidate for Savisaar's People's Front.

8. Comeback for Nomenklatura?

9. The next big political event in Estonia will be the local elections on 17 October.

10. "It is very probable that the parties now in power in the Riigikogu and the government will lose. But that is not likely to have any effect at the national level-meaning new elections or a new government," says Kalmre.

11. The reason is party structure-the fact that the parties operate mainly in the capital. The elections will be won by prominent people who can promise improvements in connection with local issues.

12. Many of those probable winners are people close to former Prime Minister Tiit Vahi and his Coalition Party. They are people who were in prominent positions even back in the Soviet era, and they are not so much politicians as they are experts, kolkhoz leaders, and so on.

13. In the parliamentary elections a year ago, individuals of that type united around the election coalition Kindel Kodu (Secure Home), which has now split up but whose presidential candidate was then-President Arnold Ruutel.

14. In Tallinn, they have grouped themselves into the Raeklubi (City Hall Club), with Mayor Jaak Tamm as their leader.

15. "Anyone who knows anything about politics knows that Jaak Tamm and Tiit Vahi are very close to each other," says Kalmre.

16. The corresponding position in Tartu is occupied by Tiit Veeber, a businessman who is also an official in the agency that handles supplies of energy, water, and so on.

17. "In the parliamentary elections, securing Estonia's independence was the central issue. In the local elections, the issues will be how to get hot water to households. That is something that Veeber knows all about."

18. The fact that some members of the former nomenklatura are expected to make a comeback at the local level can perhaps be explained as a phenomenon paralleling Communist leader Algirdas Brazauskas' return to power in Lithuania. But there are also differences. Kalmre does not believe that Estonia's former Communist

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leader, Vaino Valjas, is going to be an Estonian Brazauskas.

19. What does resemble events in Lithuania is that Arnold Ruutel may eventually return with the backing of the group surrounding Vahi. He is still very popular.

20. Do Not Elect Only Estonian-Minded Candidates

21. There is also considerable advance interest in the question of how the local elections will turn out in the Russian-dominated areas, especially in the northeast and in Paldiski, which until very recently was still a closed Russian military town.

22. All residents who register have the right to vote, but only Estonian citizens can be candidates. In the Russian-dominated localities, many residents are not citizens.

23. Both Kalmre and Taagepera consider it a good sign that so many noncitizens have registered to vote.

24. Paldiski has been considered problematical because the Estonian authorities do not have a clear picture of who lives there. The government therefore decided to propose that the parliamentary elections be postponed in Paldiski, but a few days later it changed its mind.

25. "It was a good decision. If they had suspended the elections in Paldiski, the current leaders in Sillamae, Kohtla-Jarve, and Narva would also have had a reason to suspend the elections in their areas, too," says Kalmre.

26. In Narva and the other towns in the northeast, the situation is not as tense as has been reported in the West, according to Kalmre. He points out that there are many different groups of Russians there and that not all of them support Narva leader Vladimir Chuykin.

27. "The only thing Chuykin and his group are interested in is holding on to power. That is why it helps them if the situation is unstable and the Estonian Government fails completely as a result. But if the government and parliament remain calm, those who represent a more moderate line than Chuykin will be supported in the election. The problem is that there are no outstanding leaders on that side," says Kalmre.

28. Rein Taagepera considers the biggest danger to be the chance that voters in Narva and the other towns will elect only Estonian-minded candidates. It is important that representatives of Chuykin and his supporters also be elected.

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29. "Until now the leadership in Narva has been more anti-Estonian than the town's residents. That situation should not reverse itself now: The leadership should not be more Estonian-minded than the population," says Taagepera.

30. "Tartu Has Dozed Off"

31. Tartu-Tartu has dozed off and is not playing the same role as generator of ideas in the Estonian political debate that it did a few years ago, says Vahur Kalmre, editor in chief of the Tartu newspaper POSTIMEES.

32. There has traditionally been rivalry between Estonia's capital, Tallinn, and the country's second-largest city, Tartu. Their rivalry can be compared to that between Moscow and St. Petersburg in Russia, Stockholm and Goteborg in Sweden, and perhaps Helsinki and Tampere/Turku in Finland.

33. Tartu is described as the city of ideas, while Tallinn is the city of power. This may be because there is a humanities-oriented university in Tartu, while university education in Tallinn is more technically oriented. Another factor during the Russian era was that the party's grip was not as strong in Tartu as in Tallinn.

34. "Historically, that is true. But at the moment, Tartu is not playing the same role that it did five years ago, for example, when the People's Front (Rahvarinne) emerged. Most of the People's Front's ideas were hatched in Tartu at the time."

35. Now a great many of the most prominent personalities in Tartu have moved to Tallinn. This applies, for example, to Marju Lauristin, Ulo Laanoja, Lagle Parek, Viktor Niitsoo, and Enn Tarto.

36. In the 1960's, the so-called sociology group, which included Lauristin, Mikk Titma, and Ulo Vooglaid, among others, was active at the university. Back in 1965, together with Tartu's newspaper, which was called EDASI at the time, that group conducted the first public opinion poll anywhere in the Soviet Union.

37. Tartu's special role during the Soviet era was obvious from, among other things, the fact that articles that could not be published in Tallinn could be printed in EDASI- for example, an article on UFO's by Tunne Kelam, who is now a well-known politician in the ERSP (National Independence Party) and deputy speaker of parliament. Debates on the size of families and the number of children could also be carried in EDASI but not in Tallinn's newspapers.

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38. The best-known example from more recent times was the program for an independent Estonian economy within the Soviet Union, known as the IME [self-managing Estonia]. It could not be published in the party's main newspaper RAHVA HAAL, even though one of the authors, Siim Kallas, was that newspaper's assistant editor in chief at the time.

39. "So Edgar Savisaar drove to Tartu and saw to it that the article was published in EDASI," Kalmre said.

40. The fact that Tartu has now dozed off slightly is also explained by Kalmre as being due to the circumstance that the university's last three rectors have been technically oriented. But now the university has a new rector, Peeter Tulviste, who may get the city to wake up again. He is a classical scholar and was one of the signers of the Letter of the 40 in 1980—the protest by Estonian intellectuals against the Russianization policy of the Brezhnev era.

41. "He is a wise and modern man, and I believe that something is going to change at the university."

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