

AUTUMN BALL

Architect Maurer knew very well that the city in which he lived [Mustamäe, a Soviet housing estate] was an invention of the twentieth century. ... Maurer also shared the opinion that the creation of a new town was inevitable. One had to get rid of the evils of the previous formation. Le Corbusier and his numerous followers in all the countries of the world explained why the old town grew outdated ... The new towns had to be different ... The dark, dirty courtyards would disappear. Air and sunshine would be accessible from all sides. ... [However,] [b]uilding new towns came up against amazing, quite unpredictable obstacles. ... For example, at the beginning of the fifties, a real new town was built in the United States, in St. Louis. It sprang up on the site of a former dirty suburb. It was designed by the finest architects. ... [But] [f]inally, the new town was almost empty. ... The attempt to change society and living conditions in the USA was reported to have ended in the municipality's decision, in the mid-seventies, to blow up the abandoned dreamtown which had got out of control. This was the people's answer to their benefactors! ... Maurer observed with astonishment how the architects of the new generation despised the City of the Sun ... He remembered the sadness of a celebrated architect who liberated the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro from its squalid favelas and erected instead of them a beautiful, spacious, functional satellite town. Never again would hot-blooded samba rhythms ring here, the famous architect had sighed. And they hadn't. But the architect made his choice. He preferred human happiness to the samba. Had the choice been wrong? Maurer asked himself indignantly. Would it be better to prefer the samba to human happiness? Down with Mustamäe! Let's dance the *tuljak* between the vendors' stands on Stroomi Beach. This was what the new generation of architects wanted to do in Maurer's opinion ... And they said the senseless large fields between the dull monsters that were the buildings were neither nature nor street, neither places nor spaces, neither roads nor squares. One could neither relax nor stroll there, neither lie down nor take a breath of fresh air, and the only idea they really seemed to suggest was that of drinking. Architect Maurer knew very well that not everything had turned out perfectly at Mustamäe. ... [But] Maurer hated nostalgia. ... He preferred the Sun to the Moon.

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