

## **The Goshawk Trilogy**

Eimar O'Duffy

Social credit provided the central theme of Eimar O'Duffy's mythical science-fiction fantasy trilogy. Published in three volumes, it is a comic indictment of politics and economics in the contemporary world. *King Goshawk and the Birds* (1926) portrays the philosophy of the capitalist financial system followed through to its logical conclusions: a monopoly has been established over song-birds and wild flowers. The second book, *The Spacious Adventures of the Man in the Street* (1929) portrays a world where a sane credit system, offering sufficiency and leisure for all, is viewed through the unsympathetic eyes of a speculative opportunist. Finally, in *Asses in Clover* (1933) the god-hero travels through the kingdom of Assinaria. There professors of the dismal science discuss how far the standard of living must be lowered in order to raise it, and the impossibility of providing an income for all in a land of plenty when there is no demand for labour.

Despite their comic form, the books carry a sombre message. A social credit Utopia on the moon is destroyed by capitalist financial pressures. On earth, those who can afford to pay to hear song-birds and see wild flowers are content to do so. Those suffering abject poverty are too preoccupied with their plight to care about the world they have lost. The trilogy has an uncannily prophetic ring.

On his death in 1935 O'Duffy was described by Douglas as an economist of 'no mean order, combining the typical Irishman's hatred of pomposity with a delicate sense of proportion. His books will, for many years, provide a touchstone of reality'.

O'Duffy also published a social credit text, *Life and Money*, described as 'a critical examination of the principles and practice of orthodox economics with a practical scheme to end the muddle it has made of our civilization', which went to several editions. He questioned the assumptions underlying the growth of competition. Why should the 'manifold devices for the saving of labour' coupled with the multiplication of the fruits of nature and 'increasing social aggregation . . . have so utterly incongruous a result?'