

## MOND family

### LUDWIG MOND (1839 - 1909), chemical technologist and manufacturer

Ludwig Mond was born on 7 March 1839 in Kassel, Germany the son of Moritz Bär Mond (1811-1891), a Jewish merchant, and his wife, Henriette, née Levinson (1816-1891). He was educated at schools in Kassel, followed by university studies at Marburg and Heidelberg. He worked in factories in Germany and the Netherlands, moving to England to join John Hutchinson & Co. in Widnes in 1862. He then gained experience in Utrecht (1864-1867) before returning to Widnes. In 1866 he married his cousin Frida Löwenthal (1847-1923). They had two sons, Robert Ludwig (1867-1938) and Alfred Moritz (1868-1930).

In 1873 he moved to Winnington, Cheshire and there founded the chemical company Brunner, Mond & Co. with his partner John Tomlinson Brunner. In 1880 Ludwig became a naturalised British subject. In 1884 he moved to London, where he remained until his death.

In 1889, Ludwig and his Austrian assistant, Dr Karl Langer developed a new process for the recovery of nickel called the carbonyl process. This new method removed impurities from the ore, leaving behind pure nickel. Using this discovery, in 1900, Ludwig established The Mond Nickel Mining Company with his two sons, Alfred and Robert, and built a refinery in Clydach in the Swansea valley.

The company began production in 1902 and it brought prosperity to a previously economically deprived area. Clydach was chosen because it had excellent transport links so that raw ore could be easily imported from the company's Canadian mines. The River Tawe provided a constant source of water for the cooling process, and the local anthracite coal produced the energy and gases required in the refining process. By 1910, over 40 per cent of the local village population worked in the refinery and by 1921 it had become the largest nickel works in the world. Ludwig introduced an eight-hour workday and built housing for his employees.

Ludwig was elected to fellowship of the Royal Society (1891), membership of the German Chemical Society, the Società Reale of Naples (1908), and of the Prussian Akademie der Wissenschaften (1909). He received honorary doctorates from the universities of Padua (1892), Heidelberg (1896), Manchester (1904), and Oxford (1907). He was awarded the grand cordon of the Crown of Italy in 1909. He was a polymath whose interests went beyond his industrial profession. He was extremely knowledgeable about antique furniture and art, and most of his art collection was left to the National Gallery, London.

Ludwig Mond suffered from heart disease, from which he died on 11 December 1909 at his house The Poplars, 20 Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London. In later life he returned to an interest in his Jewish heritage and was buried with Jewish rites at the St Pancras cemetery, Finchley. His sons later erected a family mausoleum at his grave.

Ludwig Mond is remembered for his groundbreaking contributions to industrial chemistry, particularly in nickel production, his role in founding major chemical companies, his philanthropy in support of science and education, and his promotion of international scientific collaboration. His legacy continues to influence the fields of chemistry and industry.

### Sir ROBERT LUDWIG MOND (1867 - 1938), chemist and archaeologist

Robert Mond, chemist and archaeologist, was born at Farnworth, near Widnes, Lancashire, on 9 September 1867. He was married twice; to Helen Edith (c. 1873-1905), the third daughter of Julius Levis, in 1898, by whom he had two daughters; and, in 1922, to Marie Louise (1869-1949), daughter of Guillaume Jean Le Manach, of Belle-Isle-en-Terre, Brittany, and widow of Simon Guggenheim. Robert was a distinguished chemist in his own right and published his scientific research. He became the director of several of the companies established by the Mond family. He both funded and did field work in Egyptian archaeology. He was knighted in 1932. He died in Paris on 22 October 1938 and was cremated at the cemetery of Père Lachaise. His ashes were buried at Belle-île-en-Terre.

### ALFRED MORITZ MOND (1868 - 1930), industrialist and politician

Alfred Mond, industrialist and politician, was born on 23 October 1868, in Farnworth, Widnes, Lancashire. He was educated at Cheltenham College and later studied at St. John's College, Cambridge, where he failed his natural science tripos. He then studied law at the University of Edinburgh and was called to the bar of the Inner Temple in 1894, briefly practising on the North Wales and Chester circuit. He married Violet Goetze (1867-1945) in 1894, and they had four children, Violet Florence (1895-1973), Mary Angela (1901-1937), Henry Ludwig (1898-1949), and Rosalind Jean (1905-1966).

Alfred Mond joined his father's firms Brunner Mond & Company and the Mond Nickel Company and became managing director of both. The latter merged with three other companies to form Imperial Chemical Industries (ICI) in 1926, of which he was the first chairman. ICI became one of the largest and most influential chemical companies in the world, and Alfred Mond's leadership was instrumental in its development. His business acumen and innovative spirit helped modernize British industry, and he was a strong advocate for scientific research and industrial efficiency.

Alfred Mond served as Liberal Member of Parliament for the seats of Chester (1906-1910), Swansea Town (1910-1918), Swansea West from 1918 until his defeat in 1923 and Carmarthenshire from 1924 to 1928, joining the Conservative party in January 1926. He objected to **Lloyd George's** Land Policy which he saw as the nationalization of agricultural land, and unacceptable to his individualistic principles which opposed socialism.

His political career was marked by his advocacy for free trade and industrial progress. He was a large man with a recognisable German accent. He could be blunt, direct, and occasionally ill-mannered and was considered eccentric. He held several government positions including First Commissioner of Public Works (1916-1921), where he proposed the creation of the Imperial War Museum, and Minister of Health (1921-1922). Mond believed in the importance of close cooperation between employers and the labour force. He was co-chairman of the Mond-Turner industrial peace conferences (1928-1930), a failed attempt to improve relations between management and unions after the General Strike of 1926.

In Clydach, Alfred Mond continued his father's paternalistic approach to their employees, and they introduced paid holidays for weekly-paid workers. He paid his workers nine shillings a week more than the national average. The Monds also provided many amenities for their workers; he created recreational parks, bowling greens and other sporting amenities for the benefit and enjoyment of his employees. He also constructed a golf course for his workforce at a time when golf was a pursuit of the upper classes. The golf club still exists in Clydach. Critics argue that he was interested in his employees' welfare, but not in workers' rights.

He was created a baronet in 1910. In 1928, he was elevated to the peerage as Baron Melchett of Landford, recognizing his contributions to both industry and public service. He was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1928.

Alfred Mond was not raised as a Jew, and married in the Church of England, but he was still subject to antisemitic attacks. As a result, following the Balfour Declaration in 1917, he became a firm and dedicated supporter of the Zionist cause. He financially supported Jewish settlers in the British Mandate and established a town in the Sharon region of Israel called Tel Mond. His former house there is now a museum.

Alfred Mond died in his London home, 35 Lowndes Square, on 27 December 1930, and is buried in the family mausoleum in Islington and St Pancras Cemetery, East Finchley, London. He is remembered for his pivotal role in the development of the British chemical industry through his leadership of ICI, his contributions to public service and social welfare, his support for Zionism and Jewish causes, and his cultural and philanthropic efforts. His legacy is one of innovation, social commitment, and a lasting influence on both industry and society.

## Author

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