

NCERT Notes: Wavell Plan and Shimla Conference

Subject: History

Category: Modern History

Topic: Wavell Plan and Shimla Conference

NCERT notes on important topics for the UPSC civil services exam preparation. These notes will also be useful for other competitive exams like banking PO, SSC, state civil services exams and so on. Wavell Plan and Simla Conference are important topics from modern Indian history for IAS exam.

Wavell Plan

- Lord Wavell became the Viceroy of India in 1943 succeeding Lord Linlithgow. In June 1945, he announced his proposals to break the constitutional deadlock in India. This was called the Wavell Plan. (The deadlock was because the Congress wanted a united India whereas the Muslim League wanted partition.)
- The Viceroy's Executive Council was to have all Indian members except the Viceroy himself and the Commander-in-Chief.
- The council was to have a 'balanced representation' of all Indians including 'caste-Hindus', Muslims, Depressed Classes, Sikhs, etc. Muslims were given 6 out of 14 members which accounted for more than their share of the population (25%).
- The Viceroy/Governor-General would still have the power of veto but its use would be minimal.
- The foreign affairs portfolio would be transferred from the Governor-General to an Indian member. Defence would be handled by a British general until the full transfer of power was made.
- A conference would be convened by the Viceroy to get a list of all the members recommended to the Council from all parties concerned. In case a joint list was not agreed upon, separate lists would be taken from the parties. This was to be the Shimla Conference.
- If this plan worked, similar councils would be formed in all provinces comprising of local leaders.

Shimla Conference

- Lord Wavell invited 21 political leaders including Mahatma Gandhi and M A Jinnah to Shimla, the summer capital of British India to discuss the Wavell Plan.
- The Shimla Conference took place on June 25, 1945.
- The conference was a failure because the League and the Congress could not settle their differences.
- Jinnah insisted that only League members could be the Muslim representatives in the Council, and opposed to the Congress nominating Muslim members. This was because

Jinnah wanted the League to be the sole representative of Muslims in India. The Congress would never agree to this demand.

- In the Wavell Plan, there were 6 Muslim representatives out of 14 members, which was more than the Muslim share of population. Despite this, the League wanted the power of veto to any constitutional proposal which it believed was not in its interest. The Congress opposed this unreasonable demand also.
- Jinnah refused to give the names to the council unless the government acknowledged that only the Muslim League was the exclusive representative of Indian Muslims.
- The Wavell Plan, thus, was dissolved with the failure of the conference.
- After this, the war ended and a new Labour government was elected in Britain. This new government was intent on giving independence to India without much delay and sent the Cabinet Mission with that purpose.