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**PARTY COMMITTEE OF BAC GIANG PROVINCE (VIETNAM)  
LED THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PEOPLE'S WAR REAR  
THROUGHOUT THE PROVINCE (1946-1950)**

***Abstract.*** To fight against the conspiracies and guiles performed by the French colonialists in the province of Bac Giang (1946-1950) and to solve problems on potentials, to provide manpower and financial resources for the war, based on historical conditions of the locality, the Party Committee of Bac Giang province led the people in the province to build stronger and more comprehensive people's war rear. The results of the leadership in the rear construction of the Province's Party Committee in this period contributed to motivating the war throughout the province in particular to become stronger, as well as creating an important momentum for the Party Committee to continue leading the successful construction of after the people's war in the period of 1951-1954, quickly bringing the resistance to victory.

***Key words.*** People's War rear, the Party Committee of Bac Giang Province, Viet Nam's war.

**1. A number of factors affecting the leadership of the Province's Party Committee in rear construction**

*Regarding geographical location, natural conditions:* Bac Giang province's area during the anti-French colonialism resistance war was 39,089 km<sup>2</sup> wide, bordered by Hai Ninh and Quang Yen provinces to the East; Thai Nguyen and Vinh Phuc provinces to the West; Bac Ninh and Hai Duong provinces to the South and Lang Son to the North. In the area of Bac Giang province, there were arterial traffic routes running through such as National Route 1A, Hanoi - Lang Son railway, route 13B (now known as road 31) running from Phu Lang Thuong town to the Luc Nam, Chu, An Chau town, connected to Road No. 4. The river system included 3 rivers: Cau River, Thuong River and Luc Nam River, the downstream concentrated in Pha Lai. Bac Giang's topography was divided into mountainous and midland areas, mountainous areas with dense woods, high mountains and midlands with many bare hills, and some high points emerging. The climate had the characteristics of a transitional climate zone, with both hot and warm tropics and Asian tropics, the average rainfall was 1500-1700mm, the average annual temperature was 23<sup>0</sup>C. The land was large and fertile, some fields had moderate areas such as Duong Huu, Vi Loai, Thanh Luan, Chien Son, Bien Dong. The villages in the lowlands had few densely populated villages, averaging 80-100 families, living 500-1000m apart, most villages were surrounded by bamboo fences.

Geographical location and natural conditions of the province caused some difficulties such as: French colonialists paid special attention to important traffic routes, focused on building occupied positions along the two sides of the road to control the resistance force in Bac Giang. The roads and rivers were convenient for maneuvering, traffic, communication while the forests, high points were convenient for parachuting commandos to attack the rear, or for the bandits to hide. The French colonialists exploited and took advantage of these points to attack, sweep, forage the revolutionary base and rear of the province. If Bac Giang was conquered, the French colonialists would turn Bac Giang along with midland provinces into

corridors to protect Hanoi, protect the Northern plains and coastal area and directly threaten the Viet Bac revolutionary base, cut off the road of communication from Interzone III via Bac Giang to Viet Bac, control the route from Lang Son border to Hanoi. However, geographical location and natural conditions also had advantages such as: Bac Giang was the gateway to the Viet Bac interzone, free zone districts received safety protection from Viet Bac revolutionary base, the transportation routes through Bac Giang became a bridge between Interzone III and Viet Bac revolutionary base. The land, rivers, and climate were favorable for the construction and development of agricultural economy such as planting rice, crops, fruit trees, afforestation; handicrafts, commodity production, to meet self-sufficiency needs of food and aid for the resistance. Mountainous and village terrain were favorable for operating guerrilla warfare (CTDK), building fighting farms and villages, building guerrilla zones (KDK), guerrilla bases (CCDK). *Socio-economic characteristics:* The economic strength of the province was mainly agriculture, but the production customs were still fragmented, small, the system of dykes, canals, ditches were damaged, and in poor quality causing droughts and floods for many years resulting in bad harvest. Breeding was quite developed, providing breeds and food for many neighboring provinces; the industrial base was meager and undeveloped; In the field of cottage industry, there were many famous traditional craft villages, creating jobs for local laborers, supplying goods to meet the consumption needs of the people. Due to favorable natural conditions and a large free zone, Bac Giang became a base for a number of central agencies and provinces and attracted many people from many provinces to migrate, evacuate and flee from the enemy to do business and live. The peasant force was large, purely agricultural, the majority of Kinh people and large migrants are strong points, becoming an active workforce, living economically, creating food to meet the needs of self-sufficiency, and serve the resistance. Most of the people in the province

were patriotic and enthusiastic in participating in the resistance. In terms of ethnic composition, the Kinh made up the majority and lived mainly in the midlands, the remaining 7 ethnic groups including Nung, Tay, San Diu, Hoa, Cao Lan, San Chi, Dao lived interspersedly with Kinh people concentrating in mountainous districts. Most of the ethnic minorities had low and uneven educational level, difficult life, with many backward cultural unsound customs. A part of the people were exploited, bribed and divided by the French colonialists while The majority of the rest had the spirit of patriotism, solidarity and supported for the resistance. Regarding religion, before the August 1945 revolution, Bac Giang had 26,000 parishioners living in 45 communes, mainly concentrated in Viet Yen.

*Historical tradition, culture:* Over thousands of years of struggle to build and protect the homeland and the country, the people of Bac Giang created many typical historical and cultural values such as patriotic and revolutionary traditions, the dauntlessness in the fight against foreign invaders, the most recent was the Yen The uprising under the leadership of Hoang Hoa Tham lasting for nearly 30 years (1884-1913); the tradition of solidarity, mutuality; the tradition of industriousness and creativity; the tradition of culture and fondness for learning . These good values continued to be inherited and developed during the anti-French colonialism resistance war for independence and freedom of the homeland and the country. During the struggle for government in Bac Giang (1943-1945), revolutionary bases were formed in many places (Hiep Hoa, Yen The, Lang Giang, Luc Nam) and continued to be built, developed to become the rear of the anti-French colonialism resistance.

*Conspiracies and actions of French colonialism in Bac Giang province:* In March 1947, the French colonialists invaded Son Dong and Luc Ngan, implementing the strategy of "quick fight, quick victory" until October 1947, the French colonialists basically finished occupying two districts of Son Dong and Luc

Ngan. In 1948, the French colonialists shifted to a long-term strategy of fighting and implemented the policy of "The war will feed itself, using the Vietnamese to rule the Vietnamese". Specifically: the French colonialists stepped up to sweep and raid resistance bases, arrested cadres and party members; established the position of occupation; forced the people to establish occupied area; implemented the policy of "divide and rule", bribed ethnic minorities (Tay, Nung), caused divisions and enmity among ethnic groups, colluded with the Chinese to isolate the Kinh people, disunite the people from the government, propagandized the founding of the *Nung autonomic land* against the revolutionary government; established a network of second bureau (intelligence), informants, commandos; recovered social evils, seduced young people to join the army. The fierce persecution of the French colonialists dislodged the resistance forces stationing in the area (Party bases, authorities and cadres, party members, militias and guerrillas), forcing the resistance forces in many places to suspend their operation, withdraw to the free zone to preserve forces.

On July 13, 1949, the French launched the Bastille campaign to capture the provinces of Bac Giang, Bac Ninh and Phuc Yen. In Bac Giang, the French colonialists expanded their occupation and controlled the districts of Lang Giang, Viet Yen, Yen Dung and committed many acts of terrorism, destroying resistance forces, and raiding the rear of the province as they had done in Luc Ngan, Son Dong.

In late 1949 and early 1950, the French colonialists explored and raided free zones of the province (Hiep Hoa, Yen The, Huu Lung). During this time, the French colonialists opened many sweeping battles in the temporarily occupied French area, intensified the raid on traffic routes, prevented the transport of military provision of Bac Giang on the route connecting the Interzone III with the Viet Bac War zone (the route of Cau Lo, Dai Giap, San, Doc Coc, Ri); mobilized troops in

subdivisions and sub-zones to launch raids on the guerrilla zones. The actions of the French colonialists caused the resistance forces to be knocked out from the people, lose their land and bases, and they had to withdraw to a free zone in order to preserve their forces.

In the aforementioned historical context, in order to solve problems on potentials, to provide manpower and financial resources for the war, protect the rear, to implement the policy of building the people's war rear of the Central Party, the Party Committee of Bac Giang province led the people to build the People's war rear in the direction of increasing comprehensive strength, contributing to promoting the war to a higher level.

## **2. Bac Giang Provincial Party Committee led the construction of the people's war rear**

In order to turn all aspects of people's life into a state of war, implement the policy of all people scorched earth resistance of the Party Central Committee and President Ho Chi Minh, the Province's Party Committee launched the movement of nation-wide scorched earth, implementing the plan *empty gardens, evacuated houses*. In parallel with the activities of damaging infrastructures, the Province's Party Committee mobilized and organized the people to evacuate, established the Evacuation Board, the Rescue Committee and deployed the evacuation of the people from the upcoming combat zones, and agencies, schools, factories, hospitals were also moved to the free zone and the people were arranged with jobs.

Entering the war, the issue of building and developing the strong people's armed forces (LLVTND), towards the goal of step-by-step modernization in order to create human resources for the front were deployed by the Provincial Party Committee quickly, continuously and throughout the war. Regarding the personnel, the province's Party committee focused on building and consolidating the militia and guerrilla force (DQDK), the local self-defense, making the militia and guerrilla

force become the core force in the guerrilla warfare movement in the rear. Concentrated guerrilla teams were born, teams of senior guerrilla, women guerrilla, teenagers' guerrilla were formed in many localities and actively trained. By 1948, the militia and self-defense force had grown to nearly 36,000 people, the militia and self-defense's main task was to serve the war, fence the village, make spikes, mines, and traps and keep order and security within the People. In early 1949, the province developed 14 guerrilla platoons with 577 members. Implementing Directive dated August 18, 1949 of the Party Central Committee on building the Local Force, promoting the guerrilla warfare and based on the situation of the province, on September 11, 1949, the Standing Committee of the Provincial Party Committee issued a Resolution requesting: It was urgent to build up the armed forces and semi-armed forces to promote guerrilla warfare, actively destroy the enemy's energy and protect the people [1, 186]. The provincial army section directed the district army sections, commune army sections to promote the development of the local force and militia and guerrilla force. In September 1950, the province's militia and guerrilla force developed to more than 6,000 members, "the largest number was Lang Giang district with 1,025; Yen The with 1,225; Luc Ngan with 3,239 guerrillas" [5, 79]. In addition to fighting to protect the rear, the militia and guerrilla force was also ready to add troops to the local force and the main force. In August 1948, the province's 555 company was established with more than 100 members. By the end of 1948, the whole province had built 6 local force companies and by the end of 1949 the concentrated guerrilla teams in the district were transformed into local force companies. Yen The and Hiep Hoa were the districts actively building local force and developing militia and guerrilla. In November 1949, the province established the first main force battalion (battalion 61), consisting of companies 555, 198 (established on August 19, 1949) and



company 511 (established on November 5, 1949). ). So up to this time, the local People's Army Force had formed all three kinds of troops.

Regarding training and coaching, soldiers and guerrillas were trained in guerrilla tactics, combat coordination, shooting techniques, bayoneting, and throwing grenades. The province decided to bring the concentrated guerrillas of a number of districts and communes to fight in the temporary occupation area and send cadres, soldiers and guerrillas to Bac Ninh province to both participate in the fight and learn guerrilla warfare experience, and how to dig secret shelter. In 1948, the provincial army section organized many training courses on combat commanding techniques for cadres of battalions, district army sections, commune army sections and district cadres, the party secretary also had to learn more - military techniques and tactics. The province launched a patriotic emulation movement in the people's armed forces and the local people, the military agency widely popularized the way of guerrilla fighting in the militia and guerrilla force and the People.

The Provincial Party Committee decided the committees at all levels must send members to be in charge of the military from the province to districts and communes, and all party cells sent one third of their party members to join the guerrilla force, in order to strengthen the Party's leadership in the armed force. The second congress of the Party Committee (July 1949) advocated strengthening the fighting armed forces, ready to coordinate with the main force to fight at anytime, anywhere in the province. The province's Party Committee organized many political training sessions to raise awareness for cadres and soldiers, the teaching materials included *The long-term fight is sure to achieve victory*, *Simple explanation on historical materialism*, *President Ho Chi Minh's teachings to the armed forces* and 12 oaths, 12 disciplines of the army were learnt. The newspaper named as *National defense army* and *Guerrilla force* were a source of propaganda



materials to motivate cadres and soldiers. In early 1950, the associated party cell executive of the battalion 61 was established and the companies could build party cells.

To equip weapons, ammunition, provide food for the fighting soldiers, guerrillas, The Province's Party Committee launched movements to support and help the army with food and weapons and receive active response and contribution of the people in various forms. "The Soldier's Mother Association and mass organizations registered to welcome war invalids to their families to take care of. Many villages and communes have spent part of their land for mass organizations to organize production to support soldiers and guerrillas. In the districts of Hiep Hoa, Lang Giang, Yen The, Yen Dung, people voluntarily donate money, clothes and medicine to the army units. Many families plant more vegetables, make more jars of soy sauce, jars of eggplant fruit and canarium, and store firewood and straw so that when the soldiers come to station, they would support them. The Soldier's Mother Associations and the Women's Union sub-groups at the grassroots level in turn assigned people to sew clothes for the soldiers" [2, 200].

Implementing the nation-wide movement of fighting the enemy, on the basis of the fighting villages built before the war, the Party Committee of Bac Giang province led the people to continue promoting the construction of fighting villages in many places. In August 1949, the Province's Party Committee proposed a plan for the communes along the road 1A: "All villages along the road No. 1 must complete the fighting village, make more small secret shelters which can contain 2 to 3 people" [4, 74].

In Lang Giang, the government assigns the task to the militia and guerrilla force in communes to step up the construction of fighting villages. The militia and guerrilla force in the communes coordinated with the people to carry out activities to build fighting villages such as digging tunnels to trap tanks, building ramparts

around the village, building from house to house, making spikes, traps, trenches to avoid artillery, secret shelters to flee and hide possessions. In Viet Yen, the government sent officers to districts of Que Duong, Vo Giang and Tien Du (Bac Ninh) to learn how to build a fighting village, how to dig secret shelters. In a short time, fighting villages were built in many places, typically the villages of Chang, Kha Ly Thuong and Kha Cao commune. In Yen Dung, many typical resistance villages were born, solidly built, the militia and guerrilla force developed, bravely fought against the sweeps of enemy and protected villages, typically the Dai Dong senior guerrilla platoon. After the general campaign of destroying occupation villages and eliminating security, the Party Committee of Yen Dung District focused on directing communes to reinforce fighting villages, dig more tunnels, strengthen forces and equip weapons for local People's armed forces. In Hiep Hoa and Yen The districts, the district's Party committee built the wide People's war array, ready to fight the enemy anytime, anywhere. The preparation for combat and fighting was always ready.

In order to improve efficiency in the implementation of the rear-construction tasks of political organizations, the Province's Party Committee led the construction and consolidation of the political system from the province to the grassroots, focusing on building the party base. and the auto-working party cells.

By the end of 1945, the entire Party Committee had 9 cells with nearly 100 party members. In order to ensure and strengthen the Party's leadership over the government, unions and armed forces, the Provincial Committee sent cadres and party members to the grassroots to organize the development of party members, and new cells. Implementing the guidelines of the Provincial Committee, Party Committees of districts advocated to promote the development of Party members, focusing on developing new party members in organizations of Viet Minh Front, National Salvation Youth Union, National Salvation Women Union \, especially is

in the People's Army Force. In early 1947, the Provincial Committee strengthened the Party work at the commune level in Phu Lang Thuong town. Yen The Party Committee focuses on Party development in the area along Road 34, Thuong River, towns of Nha Nam, Bo Ha, Cao Thuong Street, in upland communes with many ethnic minorities and in the class of poor peasants, militia and guerrilla, women, ethnic minorities. The Hiep Hoa Party Committee determined that development must be associated with consolidation. The Party Committee of Yen The and Hiep Hoa also had a policy of building their party cells into auto-working party cells, capable of leading all activities in the locality. The specialized agencies of the Party Committee were built and consolidated. Party boards were established and gradually completed the personnel of cadres from province to district. Review, self-criticism and criticism for cadres and party members in the Party Committee were concerned, measures were promptly taken to overcome and correct defects. The Second Party Congress of Bac Giang Province (July 1949) set out the task of strengthening leadership from province to grassroots level; quickly building and developing the Party; strengthening political education, ideological leadership among cadres, party members and people to maintain the faith in the Party's resistance line; widely encouraging the militia and guerrilla movement. In early 1947, the Resistance Committee of Bac Giang province was established next to the administrative committee to jointly carry out the task of resistance and national construction. The Resistance Committee consisted of representatives from the Administrative Committee, the Viet Minh Front, the Lien Viet Association and military deputies. Compliance with Directive No. 27-CT/KU, dated August 7, 1947 of the Zone Party Committee and Decree No. 91 dated October 1, 1947 of the Government on the unification of the administrative and resistance committees, at the end of 1947, Bac Giang Province's Administrative Committee and Resistance Committee merged into the Administrative Resistance Committee (UBKCHC). The

province opened a training class for government officials and consolidated the Administrative Resistance Committee of communes and People's Councils at all levels.

To develop the political force of the masses, the Province's Party Committee focused on consolidating mass organizations, expanding the Provincial Unification Front. At the end of 1946, the National Popular League (hereinafter referred to as Lien Viet Association for short) was established, attracting a large number of patriotic people, intellectuals, ethnic groups, religions, parties, bourgeois, and landowners. The mass organizations from the province to the grassroots were strengthened and organized to meet the requirements of the resistance war. The Lien Viet Association and mass organizations such as Youth Union, Children's Organization, Women's Union, and Farmers' Association conducted the congress, strengthening the organization. The provincial Viet Minh opened many training courses on politics, professional propaganda skills for officials of unions.

Implementing the policy of the Party Central Committee on economic development of the resistance war, economic struggle against the enemy to ensure self-sufficiency and serve the resistance war, the Party Committee proposed a number of guidelines and measures on construction and economic struggle. In the agricultural sector, the Party Committee led and directed functional departments, agencies, mass organizations and people to try hard to overcome, repair and renew the system of canals and ditches to irrigate fields and deployed emulation movement to increase production. In addition to rice cultivation, farmers also planted forests, planted industrial crops and developed husbandry, which provided traction, ensured livelihoods and served the resistance. The cottage industries were developed step by step. The province opened a campaign of not using luxury goods from the enemy. The financial sector regularly urged the local people to fully pay taxes and recovered Indochinese currency, issued Vietnamese money, organized the

construction of national defense fund, lent money to people to buy agricultural tools and traction. The people enthusiastically participated in the movement to buy resistance bonds. To meet the food needs of the soldiers and fighting guerrillas , implementing the policy of the Central and Interzone, the Province's Party Committee directed all levels, branches and unions to implement *temporary loan work* in the People. To promote the resistance economy, the Party Committee advocated "promoting the movement to increase food production" [3, 180]. In the economic struggle against the enemy, in addition to the lines and directions on encircling the enemy's economy, the Party Committee also proceeded to temporarily grant the land of France, the Traitors, and the empty land for poor peasants. The work of fighting against landlords and rich farmers demanding to reduce rents, reduce income, and eliminate all kinds of sub-land rents and the tenantry regime carried out among the people.

In building a cultural life, educating and taking care of the people's health followed the spirit of the new social regime. The education sector organized nearly a thousand classes with tens of thousands of primary and secondary pupils. At the end of 1949, the general education system continued to develop strongly, maintaining the mass education movement. The health care work for the people was concerned and led by the Party Committee and authorities at all levels. The health sector coordinated with the authorities at all levels to promote disease prevention and treatment for the people. Many communes established Committees for propaganda and promotion of disease prevention and hygiene. Cultural and artistic movements in localities, units, agencies and schools were promoted. The cultural and information officers from the province to the district were active in disseminating the Party and Government policies and guidelines and propagating the information of victory among the people, at the same time mobilizing the people to implement the new cultural lifestyle. State and Party books and

newspapers were published in many places of the province. The Resistance Cultural Association was established, attracting many intellectuals to participate in writing poems, plays, and short stories. Cultural and artistic movements serving the resistance were promoted among youth, women, teenagers and children and the militia and guerrilla force.

### **1. Results in the construction of people's war rear**

Over the past 5 years of resistance war (December 1946 - December 1950), the local people's armed force was built and fought and step by step matured, constantly completed the personnel, gradually stabilized the organization and received political education, training and coaching to improve qualifications, techniques and tactics, weapons and provision, initially meeting the requirements of building a concentrated, regular and gradually modernized armed force. In the fighting to protect the rear, under the direction of the Province's Party Committee, the local armed force held many battles wearing out and destroying the enemy troops, and coordinated with other struggling fronts to narrow the rear of the enemy invasion war.

Fighting villages were born everywhere throughout the province, many fighting villages were solidly built to become the primitive revolutionary base of guerilla warfare, creating a premise for the creation of guerrilla zones, guerrilla bases. The fighting village was both the front wearing out and destroying the French army's energy, and the place to provide manpower and financial resources for the local People's Armed Force to stay on, organize long-term combat.

By the beginning of 1948, the number of party members increased to 2,213 people (including 1,054 official members and 172 female members) [2, 196]. By the end of 1948, party cells established party groups in areas with complicated political situation in Yen The, Hiep Hoa, in important critical places (roads 1A, 13B, around Phu Lang Thuong and Bich Dong, Dao Ngan of Viet Yen), party bases

were built. By September 1949, the number of members of the Party Committee reached 7,364 members, including 4,079 official members with good quality reaching 60%, the Party's leadership role towards the government, unions, and armed forces was strengthened. Promoting the nature of party members, many party members endured hardships to follow the masses, lead organizations of the People to fight to protect and expand the rear. However, there were still a number of cadres and party members who showed expressions of the individualism, degradation, subjective underestimate to the enemy, and failure to fulfill their duties.

The authorities at all levels, which were built more and more strongly, performed well the task of propagating, explaining and mobilizing the people to implement the lines, policies of resistance and national construction, the construction and protection of the rear. They organized the implementation of the policy of reducing rents, reducing income and dividing land of empty plantations to poor peasants. Activities of national salvation organizations in localities in the province took place vigorously. Many national salvation members were the core of the Guerrilla Militia Sponsoring Association, the Soldier's Mother Association, and the Study Promotion Association. In August 1947, the total members of mass organizations in the province's Viet Minh Front was 69,413 people, of which more than 16,000 people operated actively, by the beginning of 1949 this number increased to 125,000 people, of which the majority of them enthusiastically participated in the resistance and national construction.

In economic sector, the total output of rice and crops in 1948 increased by more than 9,000 tons compared to 1947; particularly, the average yield of rice reached 1.2 tons per hectare, the total yield reached 17,000 tons of paddy. By the end of 1950, almost the landlords and 80% of rich farmers in the free area had reduced their rents by 25%” and 19,737 acres of fields from 47 plantations was



temporarily granted to 22,614 farming households, contributing to promoting the development of agriculture; Rice production in 1949 reached 108,403 tons, the province paid 4000 tons of paddy and millions of land tax to the State.

In the school year of 1947-1948, the number of primary school pupils in the province reached 8,736. By the end of 1948, the number of high school pupils was 441 and the total number of pupils in the whole province was 12,096. The mass education movement developed widely among the people, agencies and mass organizations and there were 47,854 people out of illiteracy, many districts, communes and villages were recognized by the Government and local authorities to complete the elimination of illiteracy. The people's cultural, educational and medical life was raised to one level. The results in developing economy, culture, education and healthcare contributed to stabilizing people's life, creating people's faith in the new regime, from which the people worked hard in producing, reserving food, and supporting the resistance. Besides the positive side, in the early years of the war, the local economy did not really meet the demand for producing, fighting and improving the People's life.

The increasingly strong rear in all aspects became a base, the standing place for the leadership agency, the People's Armed Force of the province and a number of central agencies as well as neighboring provinces; served as a springboard for cadres, party members, and armed forces entering the temporarily occupied areas to promote the resistance movement. In addition to the task of supporting the front in the province, the rear of Bac Giang actively supported manpower and financial resources for other fronts.

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