

The Model of School for Southern Students in the North during the Division of Vietnam (1954-1975)

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ABSTRACT

In the period of 1954-1975, as Vietnam was split into two regions of two different political regimes, there appeared the model of School for Southern Students (SSS) in the Northern region. This special educational model was formed after the signing of the Geneva Accords which led to the division of Vietnam in 1954, and then developed along with the fight for reunification of the country until April 1975. The goal of establishing the system of SSS was to provide human resources for the resistance war against American in the South, as well as for building and developing Vietnam after its liberation; thus, special incentives and training were given to Southern students, which added to their certain contributions to the country before and after 1975. This article focuses on clarifying the factors that affect the establishment and development of SSS model, the organization, management, education and training of Southern students, thus pointing out the contributions of Southern students to the struggle for liberation of the South as well as the construction of Vietnam after the liberation day.

Keywords

Model, School for Southern Students, The North, Division of the Country.

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Introduction

In the 1954-1975 period, Vietnam was divided into two regions: The North, which was completely liberated and gradually heading to socialism; and the South, where the resistance war against the US and the US-established government of the Republic of Vietnam took place. In that context, President Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnam Government decided to bring a large number of Southern youngsters to the North, raise and train them to become the key personnel for the South during the years of war as well as for the construction of the country after its liberation (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2002). With that decision, from 1954 to 1975, more than 30,000 Southern students were brought to the North to study (Phan Xuan Yen, 2011). Southern students are those who were born in the South and later brought to the North during the 1954-1975 period, or those who were born in the North from parents being Southerners who moved to the North after the signing of the Geneva Accords. Southern students attending SSS were children of Southern officials, who followed their parents to the North; or children of Southern officials who died in the war; or those who gained achievements in combat themselves (Cao Van Dung, 2016, p.7).

The establishment of SSS system in the North is an objective requirement, as Vietnam was being divided into two. These schools acted like nuclear institutions at grassroots level which are directly responsible for educating Southern students. In nearly 21 years of existence (1954-1975), the SSS system was gradually expanded, consolidated and arranged to adapt to the circumstances of the war in Vietnam. In terms of organization, the SSS system often changes; however, it is always consistent in terms of functions, as stated in the Articles of Association of SSS system at the end of 1958: "In addition to teaching and educating Southern students, the schools must take care of

the students in all material, mental and emotional aspects instead of their families" (Ministry of Education, 1955, File 1214). The SSS system ceased to exist in 1975; however, its achievements, values, effects, influences and historical significance have been and are still spreading and effectively affecting the industrialization and modernization of Vietnam in the present and the future.

Notable research works relating to this issue include: Cao Van Dung, 2016. *Southern students: Documents and Memories*; Luu Van Quyet, 2019. *SSS in the North (1954-1975): History and Lessons*; Hanoi Pedagogical University, 1972, *List of officials being Southern students*; Nguyen Van Huyen, 1990. *Speeches and writings about education*; Pham Van Dong, 1970. *Education works and socialist teachers*; Many authors, 1999. *SSS in the North*; Many authors, 2002. *Southern students: Then and Now*; Many authors, 2004. *Half a century of Southern students in the North*; Phan Xuan Yen, 2011. *Central Reunification Committee in the resistance war against the US (1954-1975)*, etc. The above works mostly are the collection of memoirs and notes of Southern students or the staff who participated in teaching in SSS system, and mainly discuss the history, memories, training contents, teachers, achievements and limitations of the SSS system. In fact, there have not been many understandings about Southern students or many in-depth studies on the factors affecting the process of establishing SSS system, organizing, managing and raising Southern students, as well as achievements of these schools. These are the "gaps" that we want to fill in with this article. Based on the works of the previous researchers, this research is conducted mainly by exploiting original documents, namely the archives of Prime Minister's Residence, Government Reunification Committee, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, etc., including Decrees, Directives, Decisions, Reports, Work Summaries, etc. on the direction, policies, construction process, operations, etc. relating to Southern

students, as well as interviews with officials and Southern students who used to study and work in the SSS system.

In doing this research, we define a new approach to research history of education, which use historical, logical and interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary research method to complement the findings of previous scholars by presenting a comprehensive and in-depth view of the factors affecting the establishment and changes of the SSS system; the way Southern students were managed, raised and educated; and the achievements of the SSS system. From which, independent reviews and assessments on this issue are made.

Context of Establishing School for Southern Students System in the North

On May 7, 1954, with the historic victory of Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam won the war against the French with American intervention. The Dien Bien Phu victory directly contributed to the signing of the Geneva Accords (July 21, 1954) on the restoration of peace in Indochina. This is a victory on the path of national liberation of people of the three Indochina countries in general and of Vietnamese people in particular. The Accords, along with the final declaration of the Geneva Conference, became the first international legal basis to affirm the independence, unity and territorial integrity of Vietnam (Luu Van Quyet, 2010).

One of the terms of the Geneva Accords specified that the 17th parallel (Ben Hai River, Quang Binh Province, Vietnam) would be used as a provisional military demarcation line for the two sides to move their troops, transfer areas and hand over prisoners. Vietnamese resistance forces in the south of the 17th parallel were moved to the gathering area in the North, while the French Union troops were moved to the South. The Accords also stipulated that the line (the 17th parallel) is only provisional and has no boundary or territories values, and Vietnam will proceed to reunify the country through a free general election nationwide two years later (1956) (Luu Van Quyet, 2019, pp. 9-10). Vietnam then entered a period of being temporarily divided into two regions: the North, completely liberated and was proceeding to overcome the consequences of the war, restore the economy and gradually progress to socialism; and the South, which was still under French domination and American intervention.

However, the course of history did not completely follow the spirit and words of the Accords. After the Conference, Vietnam's reunification became extremely difficult and complicated due to the undermining policy of France and the US. In South Vietnam, the US replaced the French to directly intervene and plotted to permanently divide Vietnam. In order to facilitate this intervention, in 1955, the US backed and established in South Vietnam a separate country called the Republic of Vietnam, led by Ngo Dinh Diem as Prime Minister (Tran Nam Tien, 2020, p.7). That fact required the Government of Vietnam to have a new, appropriate strategy. In September 1954, the Vietnamese Labor Party determined: "We need to complete the cause of national liberation with a new form of struggle" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2002, p. 287).

Regarding the movement of troops, the Geneva Accords did not mention the gathering of students. However, as the US

attempted to sabotage the Accords and conspired to establish a puppet state in South Vietnam to serve American goals, President Ho Chi Minh (who led the Government of Vietnam at that time) made a strategic decision, which was to bring a number of children of Southern officials, soldiers and citizens to the North to study (Many authors, 1999, p.8). This strategy aimed to train cadres for the long-term revolutionary cause of Vietnam in particular, as well as the construction of Vietnam after liberation in general: "It is necessary to train and foster the next generation of cadres to serve the Southern revolution in particular and the Vietnamese revolution in general. Training Southern students is not only due to the immediate requirements of the revolution in the South, but also for the long-term benefits of the Fatherland and Vietnamese people" (Central Reunification Committee, 1956, File 0054).

With this strategy, from 1954 to 1975, over 30,000 Southern students were brought to the North to be raised and educated. Southern students brought to the North can be divided into three main installments: The first one was during 1954-1955 with more than 12,000 students; the second one was during 1961-1964 with nearly 4,000 students; and the third one during 1968-1972 with more than 3,000 students. In addition, there were more than 9,000 Southern students brought to the North, scattering during the 1954-1975 period (Luu Van Quyet, 2019, p.20). Most of Southern students who went to the North were children of officials, soldiers and Party members in the South, and were of many different ages and educational backgrounds. Bringing a large number of Southern students to the North was a major policy which reflected the strategic vision of President Ho Chi Minh and the Government of Vietnam, as they had accurately assessed the actual situation of the Vietnamese revolution in the context of a divided country and proactively prepared important factors for the fight as well as for the development years after Vietnam was reunified. Moreover, in terms of sentiments, bringing Southern students to the North also demonstrated the feelings of President Ho Chi Minh for the revolution and the people in the South, as they were unable to raise and protect their children, thus brought them peace of mind and encouraged the spirit of fighting against the US among Southern people (Many authors, 1999).

In order to ensure the effective education for Southern students in the newly-liberated Northern region which was still facing many difficulties, the Government of Vietnam instructed Ministry of Education as well as other relevant ministries and agencies to research and build boarding schools exclusively for Southern students in provinces and cities near Hanoi. By 1958, a system of boarding schools for Southern students was established in Northern provinces and cities, namely: Ha Noi, Hai Phong, Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Hai Duong, Vinh Phu, Dong Trieu, Ha Tay, Thai Nguyen, etc. (Ministry of Education, 1959, File 254) and consisted of three levels of education (primary, lower secondary and upper secondary). SSS were numbered from 1 to 28, and were collectively called *Thong Nhat School* (Reunification School), later renamed *School for Southern Students* (SSS, sometimes referred to as Southern School) (Phan Xuan Yen, 2011). Although there were 28 schools in the SSS system in the North, in fact, all 28 schools did not exist at the same time, since they were often split, merged, dissolved, or

moved in accordance with the actual situation in the North during the war (Cao Van Dung, 2016, p. 17).

The SSS system was established and developed in the North in nearly 21 years (1954-1975) with many sizes and types to suit each subject and each stage: one school for each locality; many schools in a locality; schools for one educational stage only (primary, lower secondary, upper secondary); schools for all three educational stages; schools for boys only and for girls only; schools for Chinese students only; schools for supplementing knowledge only (Ministry of Education, 1959, File 254). The SSS system was under the direct management and direction of Ministry of Education and the coordination of many ministries, central and local agencies. Throughout its existence, due to historical circumstances, the SSS system often changed in terms of organization, but was always consistent in terms of functions. According to statistics, the investment cost for building SSS was 600 million dongs in 1950; 1.2 billion dongs in 1957; and 1.5 billion dongs in 1960. 60% of the budget for education of the North in 1954-1975 was spent for raising and educating Southern students (Ministry of Education, File 409).

Organization and Management of the School for Southern Students System

The SSS system was organized in a completely different way compared to other schools in the North. This was a special type of boarding school for students whose parents died in battle, or were directly engaging in the Southern front; thus the material and mental lives of these students then and in the future were entrusted to the schools and teachers: "The schools are their families; teachers and the staff are their fathers, mothers, siblings, etc." (Prime Minister's Residence, 1958, File 18169). Besides, since the composition of Southern students was very diverse with many different backgrounds, ages and qualifications, the staffing of SSS was not fixed. After each school year, depending on the direction of the Government, the number and composition of students moving to high grades or transferring to other classes, the location of the school, the need for services of each educational stage, the capacity of staff and the self-management of the students, etc., the schools would be re-arranged accordingly (Ministry of Education, 1965, File 144). At the same time, this was also the type of school with special political nature, because it was directly related to the ongoing fight to reunify the country. If the school's operations were good, it would have positive influence on the consolidation of the North and the support for the South; on the contrary, if the organization were not good, it would be taken advantage of and cause troubles to the struggle in the South. "The issue of Southern students in the North is not merely a political work. Solving this issue well will directly contribute to encouraging the South to fight for national reunification, and at the same time have a great impact on training cadres for the South in the future. Therefore, it is necessary to have policies for educating Southern students, which is originated from directions and policies of the Government; the general direction of education must fit in with the capabilities of the North, and at the same time attention must also be paid to

the unique characteristics of each classification of Southern students" (Central Reunification Committee, 1967, File 0045). To do so, the organization and management works must point out specific and synchronous requirements; there must be a complete apparatus to lead and organize the education and raising of students; also, staff members with stances and professional qualifications are needed.

Initially, Ministry of Education assigned local Departments of Education to organize the admission and directly manage and allocate students to schools in their localities on the basis of utilizing available facilities in the locality (Luu Van Quyet, 2010). However, the schools were located far from each other, and on admission, students were not classified based on their educational stage, age, sex, etc. Meanwhile, the educational background of the students was very inconsistent: some had not went to school, some quit studying to work for 3-4 years, some studied at resistance schools, some studied in cities; some were too young (5-6 years old), some were too old (20-22 years old), etc. These led to many difficulties in managing and teaching them (Ministry of Education, 1955, File No. 217).

In order to promptly direct some working aspects of the SSS system, Ministry of Education established the *Southern Division* to directly manage these schools. The Southern Division was established in 1955, later renamed *Southern Education Board* (1956) (Ministry of Education, 1956, File 31). The Southern Division was responsible for managing the learning and ensuring the lives of Southern students brought to the North or moved there by themselves; collecting documents on education in the South to study and determine a common educational path for the SSS system; coordinating the cultivation and training of educational staff for the South, in particular:

- Developing and managing regulations, regimes and policies for Southern students.
- Managing boarding and non-boarding Southern students in terms of quantity, list-making, etc.; working on annual adjustment plan for Southern students; organizing the exchange of experience in teaching and raising Southern students.
- Being responsible for organizing schools and classes for Southern students; monitoring the situation of raising Southern students in boarding schools. Coordinating with Student Management Department to allocate Southern students to universities and vocational schools (Ministry of Education, 1955, File 210).

In addition, in 1955, the Government of Vietnam also established the *North-South Relations Committee* (by 1960, it was renamed as the *Government's Reunification Committee*) to be directly in charge of welcoming and arranging for Southern officials, citizens and soldiers gathering to the North or moving from Southern battlefields to the North; training and fostering children of Southern officials in the North; and mobilizing officials in the North to Southern battlefields. In addition to the Ministry of Education, agencies such as Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Universities and Vocational Schools, Central Organizing Committee, Central Reunification Committee, Committee for Ethnic Minorities, etc. also established institutions to be directly responsible for monitoring the raising of Southern students (Cao Van Dung, 2016, p.25).

Although the process of organizing and managing the SSS system was changed over time following the situation of the country in general and of the North in particular, from 1955 to 1975, the management of SSS system in essence was as follows: The Government develops general policies, Ministry of Education is in charge of general training, Ministry of Health cares for health, Ministry of Food ensures food supply for students, Administrative Committees of provinces and cities where SSS are located will be entirely responsible for raising and teaching Southern students according to policies of Ministry of Education. In which, ministries and agencies such as: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Food, Ministry of Internal Trade, etc. all established specialized divisions to serve SSS situated in Northern localities (Luu Van Quyet, 2019, p. 97), in particular:

- Ministry of Education is responsible for the general management of the raising and teaching of Southern students, developing orientations, organizational plans, regimes and policies for Southern students; setting criteria to select good officials, teachers and employees; directly in charge of welcoming students from the South; allocating Southern students and teachers to provinces; instructing, inspecting and urging provinces to prepare expenditure plans, consolidating these plans and together with Ministry of Finance promptly approving and allocating funds to provinces.
- Ministry of Health is responsible for protecting the health of Southern students, organizing medical examination and treatment, prioritizing students to be admitted for treatment at hospitals under the health sector's system, adequately providing medical staff, medicine and medical tools to SSS.
- Ministry of Internal Trade and Ministry of Food distribute food to provinces with SSS: food, fuel, school supplies, clothes, other technology goods, etc. in accordance with the prescribed standards and regimes as well as the specific plans of provinces as approved by Ministry of Education.
- Ministry of Finance along with Ministry of Education guide the authorization of financial management of SSS to Administrative Committees of provinces, in order to ensure timely implementation of policies, regimes, norms, targets and distribution of funds; closely check the use of finance, avoid waste and embezzlement.
- Administrative Committees of provinces and cities are entirely responsible for raising and teaching Southern students allocated by Ministry of Education to their respective province or city; selecting good officials, teachers and staff; arranging for location; building schools with adequate teaching facilities and equipment; organizing to raise and teach Southern students in accordance with the program of Ministry of Education and the prescribed standards and regimes; well organizing the protection and air defense; doing political and ideological works well among the people where the school is located; having good directions regarding political and ideological works for officials and teachers of schools (Prime Minister's Residence, 1971, File 567).

Along with the specific assignment of responsibilities to all levels and relevant ministries, in order to ensure the teaching and learning in schools are effective, based on the specific

circumstances and special characteristics of each school, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Finance agreed on the payroll regulations of SSS with specific functions, in details:

- The school's leaders consist of: 1 Principal in charge of general organization and management; 1 Vice Principal in charge of particular administrative works (for schools with more than 500 students, there is also 1 school administrator).
 - Depending on each level of education, teachers will be appropriately arranged. Teachers of primary education are arranged as follows: Grade 1 and Grade 2: each class has 3 teachers (1 homeroom teacher, 1 teacher in charge of extracurricular duties and 1 nanny); Grade 3 and Grade 4: each class has 2 teachers (1 homeroom teacher and 1 teacher in charge of extracurricular duties), and for every 2 classes there will be 1 nanny. Teachers of lower secondary education are arranged as follows: Each class has 2 teachers, and there should be teachers for all subjects (culture, music, arts, physical education and sports, household arts, etc.); Teacher of upper secondary education are arranged as follows: The ratio of teacher is 2.5, and there should be teachers for all subjects (culture, politics, music, arts, physical education and sports, household arts, etc.). Based on these criteria, teachers will be arranged to suit each type of school and class. When assigning staff for teaching or teachers, the Departments will based on the number of students at each educational stage to allocate (Central Reunification Committee, 1966, File 19169).
 - The administration department consists of: managers, accountants, food warehouse keepers, material warehouse keepers, clerks, environmental protection workers, sanitation workers, liaisons, cooks, nannies, nurses, water pump technicians, carpenters, barbers, etc. (Ministry of Education, 1970, File 245).
- From the above provisions, it can be seen that depending on the nature and size of each school, the number of staff members will be different. However, in essence, the governance apparatus in these schools is as follows: In each school, apart from the School Board, there are also departments of academic affairs, administration, management, supplies, support, health, security, teachers, nannies, etc. For each class, there are homeroom teacher and officials in charge of activities of youth union/organization and extracurricular activities. In primary schools, each class has 2 teachers (one is in charge of teaching lessons, the other is in charge of extracurricular activities) and 1 nanny to take care of students' personal hygiene, accommodation and health. In each school, there is a medicine cabinet to ensure the health of teachers and students (Phan Xuan Yen, 2011). Specific tasks are assigned as follows:
- The School Board has overall responsibility for professional, political, ideological, organizational and external affairs.
 - Department of Education and Political Thought Education is responsible for organizing the teaching works in the school (arranging classes, proposing the distribution of teachers, arranging schedules, etc.); helping the School Board to monitor and consolidate the teaching and learning situation in the school; providing teaching materials and supplies to teachers; providing textbooks and school supplies to students (making plans for purchase, storage and

distribution) and purchasing items for experiments; and directly in charge of managing library, laboratory as well as other facilities.

- Department of Organization and Cadres is tasked with assisting the School Board to resolve issues of cadre organization and policies for officials, teachers and staff of the school. In addition, it also helps the School Board to organize the implementation of policies for students and carry out political protection, management of profiles and other organization-related tasks.
- Administrative Department is responsible for management works (planning, etc.).
- Canteen Department is responsible for cooking and serving meals to staff, teachers and students.
- Health Department is responsible for taking care of and treating staff, teachers and all students in the school.
- Guard Department is responsible for protecting the school and the students, etc. (Ministry of Education, 1955, File 1214).

Thus, in order for the work of raising, educating and training Southern students to achieve high results, throughout its existence, the SSS system received the attention and direction from many relevant agencies and institutions. The Prime Minister's Residence regularly met with representatives of relevant ministries and agencies at central level as well as delegates of Administrative Committees of provinces and cities to assign responsibilities in managing the raising and education of Southern students. Vice Principal of SSS No.6 recalled: "... we was paid a lot of attention by the provincial Party Committee, Administrative Committee, Department of Education as well as other responsible agencies. At a time when there was a shortage of necessities, they still tried their best to provide for the school when we needed, from oil lamps, books, notebooks and pens to fabrics, canteen utensils, etc." (Many authors, 2002, p. 259).

Raising and Education of Southern Students

The Articles of Association of SSS stated that: "SSS has three main fields of work: raising; teaching and learning; and cultivating political thought (Ministry of Education, 1955, File 1214).

Earlier, the work of raising Southern students, especially young ones had many difficulties; however, the schools tried all possible ways to carry out this "incubating" task well. A teacher at SSS No. 18 recounted the early days of the school: "The school was located in residents' houses and scattered throughout villages. All teachers, staffs and students lived in those houses; each class had a manager of adolescence affairs, a teacher and a nanny. All three classes ate in a kitchen with food provided by local citizens. Our daily job was teaching them rhymes in the morning and organizing collective activities for them in the afternoon. The nanny took care of their daily laundry and bathing. From being illiterate, after 7-8 months, the students were able to read and write" (Many authors, 2004, pp. 90-91).

From 1955, SSS were not to raise Southern students in their own ways, but to comply with regulations and policies issued by the State. Despite the fact that the North had just been through 9 years of resistance war against the French,

and that the lives of officials, citizens and soldiers were still very difficult and deprived, Southern students were still given priority. According to Circular No. 56/TT dated August 9, 1956 of the Government, all Southern students studying in boarding schools were granted monthly living expenses of 17,000-18,000 dongs/month (the actual amount received depends on the background and age of students) (Prime Minister, 1956, File 212). In addition, students were entitled to receive clothes annually in two seasons (summer and winter) (Southern Student Education Zone, 1957, File 2018). Each year, a student would receive 2 sets of clothes (2 shirts, 2 pants), 2 undershirts, 2 shorts, 1 leaf hat and 1 face towel. In winter, students were given socks, cotton shirts and cotton blankets (students of 10 years old and younger were given a small amount of money to buy warm clothes). In addition, each student also received 1 pair of rubber sandals, 1 leather belt, 1 mosquito net and 1 scarf, which must be preserved in 4 years. If their clothes were lost or became too tight or short, they would receive new ones. Every year, each student was given a set of textbooks as well as access to books, newspapers, entertainment activities, etc. (Government's Reunification Committee, 1960, File 20871). When boarding students were sick, if the infirmary of SSS was incapable, they would be examined and treated at local people's hospitals and receive medicine and health care similar to the staff. In addition to the above provisions, based on the actual situation every year, the Government would make adjustments and promulgate new regulations on living expenses for Southern students to reassure them to study and practice (Many authors, 2004).

Unlike other students of the North, Southern students lived far from home, and most of them had no parents around. They were also different from each other in terms of age, ethnic minority, or region. Therefore, it is necessary to point out the characteristics of each type in order to determine appropriate methods and forms of education and training. Based on the characteristics of Southern students, schools undertook the responsibility of comprehensively raising and teaching them to achieve education objectives, to meet requirements of the "human cultivation" cause and to train human resources for the Southern revolution in particular and for the whole country in general after its reunification. On one hand, the schools brought up students according to the objectives of the revolutionary education and strictly implemented the prescribed education program; on the other hand, they developed a comprehensive education program (ethics, intellect, physique and aesthetics) (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2002).

Applying the 10-year general education program according to the 2nd education reform of Ministry of Education of Vietnam in 1956, SSS proceeded to divided students into 3 levels of education: primary - 4 years (Grades 1, 2, 3, 4); lower secondary - 3 years (Grades 5, 6, 7); and upper secondary - 3 years (Grades 8, 9, 10). At the end of each level, students would take an end-of-level exam (for primary and lower secondary students) or graduation exam (for upper secondary students). A school years consisted of 9 months and there was 3 months of summer vacation. Before attending Grade 1, students must go to a preparatory class to learn how to read and write. Only students of 7 years old could enter Grade 1 (Ministry of Education, 1958, File 147).

In addition to the general contents applied in the general education system throughout the North, SSS also had their own characteristics due to subjective and objective conditions and circumstances. In order to have a next generation of people who are worthy of the revolutionary cause, "it is necessary to cultivate Southern students, giving them a certain cultural capital to meet the needs, combined with strict education of thought and a strong view of working" (Ministry of Education, 1958, File 147). A comprehensive training program covering 4 aspects: ethics, intellect, physique and aesthetics was developed and implemented in SSS. Students went to class in the morning; self-studied, worked and play sports in the afternoon; and had free time in the evening under the guidance, management and support of homeroom teachers or subject teachers. Dang Van Hang, teachers of School No. 1 recalled: "One evening, the students gathered on the basketball court with their homeroom teacher and discussed with each other about the pros and cons of the week. Surprisingly, they were very self-aware and gave constructive comments to each other, and promised to overcome the limitation in the next week" (Dang Van Hang, 2002, pp. 48-49).

In SSS, self-governance, self-study and self-training were regular and popular methods in the training process of all schools: after official class hours, students had self-study time right in the classroom. Students were also clearly aware of their motive for learning: Learn for who? Learn for what? (Many authors, 2004). All of this became the goals that motivated students to learn and train by themselves. Self-governance had become a pattern and a major educational mechanism in SSS. A former Southern student recounted: "In the evening, after having dinner, we often gathered in a room to study and hear about the situation in the South from the teachers in charge. We all understood that learning is for ourselves and for the country" (Luu Van Quyet, 2015).

From 1960, the revolutionary movement in the South had been making steady progress and growing stronger. Therefore, training officials for the South became urgent and must be carried out quickly. In order to meet that need, the education and training of Southern students in this period continued to focus on and apply educational motto and principles in the new circumstances. The political report at the 3rd National Congress of the Party determined: "Our education cause must aim at fostering the young generation to become workers who own the country and have socialist enlightenment, technical understanding and health, who are comprehensively developed to build a new society." On August 31, 1960, in a letter to education officials and students of schools and evening classes, President Ho Chi Minh reminded: "Education must serve the political direction of the Party and the Government, and must be associated with production and people's life. Learning must go hand in hand with practice, reasoning must be related to reality" (People's Daily Newspaper, 1960).

In order to meet requirements in the new situation, the SSS system balanced all aspects of comprehensive education activities; curricular and extracurricular activities were not separated from each other but closely combined into complete educational contents. In addition to teaching academic knowledge, the schools also implemented the ethics cultivation program of Ministry of Education, consisting of 8 principles of education at boarding schools.

In grades 7, 8, 9 and 10, political subject was included in the curriculum; in primary schools, there was an additional 30-minute ethics lesson every Saturday; for in-service schools, political classes were attended at the beginning of each school year (Ministry of Education, 1961, File 4121). Morning exercise sessions included running and 12-movement exercise. At the end of the session, three slogans were chanted: "Healthy! To learn! Healthy! To reunite the country! Healthy! For the South!" (Luu Van Quyet, 2010). In order to improve aesthetic capacity for students, most schools had a performance team led by capable teachers. A former student of School No. 6 remembered: "The nights of performance were extremely exciting. We had only some lights and a simple stage; the student actors had no makeups and their costumes were just daily clothes; but still, the audience was not bored by it. At the end of each performance were always loud applause. Those evenings often lasted until midnight" (Many authors, 2002, p. 251).

The close combination of learning and production, "learning going hand in hand with practice" was one of the most important tasks of SSS (Ministry of Education, 1965, File 13). From the schools' point of view, attaching learning to production would help to achieve the purpose of comprehensively develop students to be politically and academically enlightened, to understand both theory and practice, and to be capable of both mental and physical labor (Ministry of Education, 1968, File 123). The goal of SSS was to train for the country workers under the leadership of the working class and the pioneering Party (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2002). Therefore, all staff, teachers and students of SSS were deeply aware that working is the most positive and revolutionary fundamental factor for building people (Ministry of Education, 1965, File 13). According to regulations of Ministry of Education, lower and upper secondary SSS would spend a whole day each week for students and teachers to do physical works as well as other activities (the prescribed time was a full day). In primary schools, the time for production work in a week was 120 minutes for Grades 1 and 2; and 180 minutes for Grades 3 and 4. For teachers, they must engage in physical work at least 240 minutes every week (Ministry of Education, 1965, File 13).

SSS organized 3 types of production work: wealth production according to the State plan; infrastructure improvement and construction; community service. In which, community service is the secondary focus; wealth production is the primary focus (Ministry of Education, 1965, File 13). In terms of education, in addition to training labor skills (time, familiarity, proficiency) and combining learning and practice (textbook knowledge and reality), it is especially necessary to educate the socialist labor consciousness (labor disciplines, self-awareness, collective labor organization, labor improvement, work for common interests, etc.), avoiding the tendency of organizing activities that are less for educational purposes (training thoughts, strengthening knowledge) and more for material ones (raising fund for the school, getting money for feasts, etc.) (Ministry of Education, 1965, File 13). Schools No. 12, 16, 23, 25, 26, 27 and 28 often had their own area for cultivation and livestock farming or crafts; many schools had self-sufficient fields, vegetable gardens, flower gardens, fish ponds, carpentry workshops, mechanical workshops,

etc. At SSS No. 24, in one school year, 12 acres of corn and yam were cultivated, nearly 19,000 kg of vegetables were harvested, equal to nearly 40 kg per capita; 11 cows and 30 pigs were raised; many craft products were repaired and produced, saving tens of thousands of dong for the public budget (Many authors, 2002, pp. 54-55).

Implementing the motto of "mental labor associated with physical labor and production", depending on the specific circumstances of each school and each locality, SSS organized for students to join farmers and workers at work. This activity was carried out regularly in schools such as: Dong Trieu, Ha Dong, Ha Nam. This helped students and teachers to attach learning to production, and at the same time complete part of the task of producing food according to requirements of the locality (Many authors, 2002, pp. 54-55). A former Southern student recalled: "At 4 in the morning, as the rooster was crowing, students and teachers started to march to the forest. We spent more than 2 hours to climb and cross the streams, walking and singing or listening to older students telling stories before arriving at the forest. We looked for a flat piece of land next to the stream to rest. Our breakfast was the bread prepared from the previous evening. After breakfast, the boys volunteered to go to the top of the mountain..." (Nguyen Tien Thang, 2005, pp. 60-61).

From 1965, as the US expanded the destructive war to the North, SSS had to evacuate to rural and mountainous areas, or even to China to protect the lives and ensure the raising and teaching of students. The evacuation to rural areas and moving some schools to China made teaching difficult. There was less time for classes, the teaching work was disturbed, the curriculum could not be followed regularly, the schools' activities must be changed to suit the new situation of the war, etc. On February 24, 1965, Ministry of Education issued a Circular emphasizing that: "under no circumstances can we let go of the purpose and method of education ..." (Ministry of Education, 1965, File 160). Regarding the implementation of education program for Southern students in the new situation, from 1965, the necessary academic curriculum was shortened as the class hours had been reduced; contents of teaching were also improved to be close to the reality of production and combat, thus help student to easy understand; practice sessions and sport activities could be arranged outside class hours, etc. (Ministry of Education, 1965, File 160).

With the attention of the Government and President Ho Chi Minh as well as ministries and agencies, along with the efforts of teachers and management staff of schools and especially the help from local people, SSS gained certain results. In the first 10 years in the North (1954-1964), the percentage of students moving up to higher grades was nearly 90%, the health and ideology of students were relatively stable, and the number of students violating disciplines was also decreasing. From 1956, there were Southern students admitted to universities (Ministry of Education, 1956, File 247), which number continuously increased in the following years. In school years 1956-1957 and 1957-1958, there were 13 and 171 Southern students admitted to domestic universities, respectively. By 1961-1962, the number of Southern students in domestic universities was 1,257; while the other 1,525 studied abroad. In general, from 1956 to 1964, the total number of Southern

students in domestic and foreign universities was 5,084 (Central Reunification Committee, 1965, File 2037). By the end of 1964, there were 2,484 Southern students graduating from domestic universities and 349 students graduating abroad (Central Reunification Committee, 1965, File 2037). In addition, there were more than 1,500 Southern students attending vocational schools from 1955 to 1964 (Central Reunification Committee, 1965, File 324). In general, from 1956 to 1973, the total number of Southern students in domestic universities and vocational schools was 8,718, and the number of students studying abroad was 12,539 (Central Reunification Committee, 1974, File 0324). As of 1975, there had been more than 16,000 Southern students graduating from universities, colleges and vocational schools; over 4,000 students attending domestic and foreign universities (Government's Reunification Committee, 1975, File 16.000). Southern students mainly attended schools of agriculture, processing, industry, chemicals, transportation, health, education, etc. These are the fields that can practically serve the construction and restoration of the South.

Contributions of the School for Southern Students System

Over nearly 21 years of establishment and development (1954-1975), the SSS system gained great achievements thanks to the coordination of Northern authorities and citizens as well as the efforts of the students themselves. In this section, we focus on presenting two major contributions of Southern students, which are contribution to the liberation of the South, and contribution to the construction of Vietnam after the liberation day (1975).

For the liberation of the South and the reunification of Vietnam, Southern students had participated in many useful and practical activities of rich forms and contents. From 1956 to 1960, there were 598 Southern students joined the armed forces or served in technical disciplines of the army, the public security force, etc. after graduating. In the following years, many Southern students went to the South to fight (Phan Xuan Yen, 2011). After 1960, the liberated zone in the South kept expanding and the demand for officials in the South grew more and more, so the North had to increasingly mobilize forces to the South. In the flow of human resources and finance from the North, many Southern students who had participated in the contingent of cadres were also mobilized to battlefields during the war. According to statistics, in 1962-1963, a total of 644 southern students joined the armed forces. In which, there are 152 armed and technical policemen, 440 soldiers, 8 navy soldiers, 44 airmen (Central Reunification Committee, 1964, File 324). In the years of fighting against the "joint warfare strategy" (1965-1968) and the "Vietnamization strategy" (1969-1975), many Southern students volunteered to return to the South, joining the army, armed forces and youth volunteer program; fighting for serving in combat, building liberation zone and bases in the South. Many former Southern students who had graduated from universities, were working in state agencies and had wives and children also volunteered to go to the South to fight (Phan Xuan Yen, 2011).

Southern students were present everywhere: some were army drivers, contact men, cryptographers, army doctors, special task force members, artillery soldiers, members of reconnaissance units, infantry soldiers; others were writers, journalists, poets or musicians whose novels, memos, poems, music compositions and paintings about the South were used as a kind of weapons (Luu Van Quyet, 2015). In the spring of 1975, tens of thousands of officials and soldiers from the North and other battlefields gathered for the Ho Chi Minh Campaign. Among soldiers of the Liberation Army, there were many Southern students who contributed to the victory on April 30, 1975 to completely liberate the South and reunify the country (Many authors, 2004).

In an article published in *Saigon Liberation Newspaper* dated November 20, 1997, former General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh devoted emotional lines to recognize the role of teachers and Southern students in the cause of reunification of the country: "The teachers and students crossed the Truong Son Mountains to go to the South and fight... They represented the great rear to fight side by side with the great front and contributed to the glorious victory of our nation. Many teachers accepted to leave behind their families and lovers to go to the South... When they could not do their job as teachers, they were happy to do other works, and fought together with soldiers and people across all fronts. All are worthy of the great heroic rear and worth to be called the students of Northern socialist schools... " (*Saigon Liberation Newspaper*, 1997).

To prepare a contingent of cadres who were formally trained and highly qualified for the construction of the country after its liberation, a large proportion of Southern students after graduating from SSS were admitted to domestic universities, colleges or vocational schools, or sent to training courses abroad. As of 1972, the total number of students trained domestically and overseas was 24,518 (Ministry of Education, 1972, File 200). By 1975, there were over 16,000 Southern students graduating from universities, colleges or vocational schools; more than 4,000 attending domestic and overseas universities; among which, over 300 had PhD degree (Ministry of Education, 1972, File 200). Most Southern students after graduating from universities, colleges or vocational schools became key officials who made important contributions to the construction of the governmental apparatus in Southern provinces and cities. Many of them became prestigious scientists, teachers, writers, artists and social activists.

After 1975, a large proportion of Southern students returned to the South to support the education sector; many continued to study at domestic and overseas universities and became professors, doctors, scientists, artists and managerial officers for organizations from central to local level. From the liberation day up to now, those "red seeds" originating from SSS have become key officials in management, science and technology of many Southern localities. From the 1980s onwards, the achievements of SSS system in education and training have been increasingly confirmed. At central level, many Southern students have been holding important positions in agencies of the Party and the State. In provinces and cities, many Southern students hold the positions of Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Chairman, Standing Member, Director, Deputy Director of ministries, agencies and state-

owned enterprises, etc. (Luu Van Quyet, 2015). A former Southern students who later became a teacher at SSS said: "I can totally feel the happiness in the eyes of teachers when their little students are now mature and are steadily treading all the paths of national construction. I can say, without hesitation, that we are the products of our teachers. They taught us every word and every virtue, which has also become a genetic trait beyond biology: To be a Southern student means to be pure, honest, righteous and brave" (Vo Thi Kim Thanh, 2005, p. 76). Another former student who is now a journalist summed up: "Over time, the "children" had grown up, both body and soul and became adults who are mature, loving and willing to sacrifice themselves for the greater good. Many of us returned to the South to join our fathers and brothers on battlefields. Some were arrested and imprisoned, many departed from this life without being able to go back to the North to thank the people there for raising them. Most of tens of thousands of Southern students had grown, and there are successful Southern students in almost every field: politics, economics, society, security, national defense, science, technology, management, etc. From the start, the socialist regime had overcome many hardships to prepare a huge team of doctors, professors, engineers, artists, generals and managers for the South when the country is reunified" (Many authors, 2004, p. 183). Raised and trained at SSS in the North during the war, most Southern students became famous engineers, doctors, writers, poets, educators, scientists, economic/social/political managers, armed force heroes, labor heroes, etc. in the country and overseas. They participated in activities across fields of politics, economy, society, security and national defense and have been making practical contributions to the construction and protection of the socialist Fatherland of Vietnam. That is the great result achieved by SSS in the North in the 1954-1975 period, and also a very proud achievement of Vietnamese revolutionary education in the revolutionary war. Just like what former General Secretary Nguyen Van Linh said: "... the hope of a few decades ago has come true, the students at that time have now become a part of the core force of our Party and State" (Many authors, 2004, p. 171).

Conclusions

In the 20th century, there were three countries in the world that were divided: Germany, Korea and Vietnam. While Germany and Korea were divided into two after the Second World War and the 1950-1953 war, respectively, Vietnam was split after the 1945-1954 war with a treaty promising to hold a general election two years later to reunify the country. That failure of a promise is the political premise for the establishment of the SSS system in the North (Cao Van Dung, 2016, p. 15). The formation and existence of the SSS system in the North during the war of Vietnam against the US is an objective requirement of Vietnamese revolution in the context that the country was divided, which became a prominent "Southern part" in social activities of the North. In nearly 21 years of existence, the SSS system had gradually expanded, consolidated and managed to suit the actual situation and meet the training requirements of the country at that time.

The SSS in the North in 1954-1975 is a new, socialist, Vietnamese-style educational model. It is the model of combining nurturing and education that use nurturing as the basis for education, where comprehensive education goes hand in hand with the revolutionary practice and is considered the motto to train the young generation for the immediate and long-term revolutionary mission. Today, it is necessary to properly evaluate the achievements and lessons of the SSS model, from which drawing lessons for the education sector in the process of building and developing country, where education and training are at the top of the national policy. The SSS system in the North is a special educational model which contributed to Vietnamese education a lot of useful lessons in many aspects: organization, management, staff building, education contents and methods, etc., thus further enriching the theory and practice of Vietnamese education in particular and world education in general.

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