

Reception of Édouard Séguin's pedagogical concepts in the pedagogy of the Second Republic of Poland

Abstract

The article discusses the direct and indirect influence that the concepts of Édouard Séguin, creator of pedagogy of people with intellectual disabilities, had on the development of Polish special and general pedagogy in the interwar period. It also presents a brief overview of the biography and achievements of the Franco-American pedagogue and doctor.

Keywords: pedagogy of the mentally disabled, Édouard Séguin, Maria Grzegorzewska, Second Republic of Poland

Introduction

The biography and achievements of Édouard Séguin, although crucial for the development of general and special pedagogy, in particular pedagogy of people with intellectual abilities (Séguin should be considered the *de facto* creator of this pedagogical subdiscipline), are not widely known. A combination of unfavourable circumstances meant that the French and then American pedagogue and doctor, both in his life and after death, did not have luck with the popularisation of his achievements, especially the promotion that would take place under his own name. Although these achievements have become a permanent part of theoretical and practical pedagogy, they are nevertheless attributed to the more famous heirs of Séguin's philosophy, such as Maria Montessori and Ovide Decroly. This state of affairs, despite the attempts to change it – also undertaken in the “Bulletin of the History of Education”¹ – is unfortunately still relevant. Therefore, although the main objective of this paper is to present the impact of Édouard Séguin's concept on the development of Polish pedagogy in the interwar period, it seems necessary to present, howev-

¹ FETZKI, T., “Édouard Séguin – jeszcze jeden zapomniany geniusz”, *Biuletyn Historii Wychowania* 2005/2006, no. 1-2, p. 108-114.

er briefly, Séguin's biography and basic methodological assumptions, as well as his impact on his followers².

Édouard-Onésime Séguin was born in the Burgundy town of Clamecy on 20 January 1812. He studied at the Collège d'Auxerre and the Lycée Saint-Louis in Paris. Next, in November 1831, he enrolled at the local law faculty. He also tried his hand at journalism, writing articles on art criticism for the Paris press. He also became politically involved in the activities of the Saint Simonists, groups of radical revolutionaries and utopian socialists.

The year 1837 brought a breakthrough in Séguin's life – after a serious illness, he gave up his previous interests and devoted himself entirely to working with people with intellectual disabilities, known in that era as “idiots”. Initially, he worked at the Institute for the Deaf-Mute, as assistant to Jean Itard (the tutor of the famous “wild” Victor of Aveyron), who introduced him to the secrets of his own experiences. Itard put young Édouard in contact with Jean-Étienne Esquirol, one of the creators of modern psychiatry. Both Esquirol and Itard, inspired and encouraged Séguin to try and explore the field of education and therapy for people with intellectual disabilities. After the death of his two mentors, Séguin opened a private school in 1840 at rue Pigalle 6. It was the first school for children with intellectual disabilities in history. His activities gained publicity, thanks to which he was appointed a teacher at the Hospice for the Terminally Ill, where he continued his pedagogical experiment. He published a book about the experiences gained at the Hospice. The book was well received by the decision-makers, which opened the doors of the famous Bicêtre Hospital to Séguin. In 1841, he took up the post of teacher there.

Séguin's supervisor at Bicêtre was another student of Esquirol, Doctor Félix Voisin. Initially, their cooperation was successful. However, Édouard quickly found himself in conflict with Voisin and the hospital administration. There were many reasons for this, the most important of which seems to be that Séguin was not an advocate of using violence against intellectually disabled people, nor did he consider it advisable to use them for hospital work. His superiors gave in to the criticism that touched him. In December 1843, Séguin left Bicêtre in disgrace.

Despite this, however, he did not cease his work and opened his private school again. Above all, however, he published his writings. In 1846, Séguin's magnum opus, *Traitement moral, hygiène et éducation des idiots* (The Moral Treatment, Hygiene and Education of Idiots and other Backward Children), was published. In this book, he presented a mature concept of working with people with disabilities, called the physiological method. However, this work was ignored by most of the medical circles with whom, as mentioned, Séguin was in conflict. Ostracization by his peers was not the only problem he faced. During the February Revolution of 1848, he again became involved with radi-

² The Reader can find more detailed information in: FETZKI, T., *Koncepcje Édouarda Séguina i ich znaczenie dla rozwoju pedagogiki osób niepełnosprawnych intelektualnie*, doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of Prof. dr hab. Wiesław Jamrozek, Poznań UAM WSE 2011 and in a series of articles published in no. 1-4 of the *Szkola Specjalna* magazine from 2012.

cal revolutionaries, who were defeated. As a result of these events, he was deemed *persona non grata* in France – both politically and professionally.

In 1850, he emigrated with his entire family to the United States of America. There, in numerous institutions, he applied his method of educating people with intellectual disabilities.

In 1862, he received his doctoral degree in medicine. As a delegate of the American Medical Association, he participated in numerous congresses and meetings. In 1873, he travelled to Vienna for the World Exhibition as an AMA delegate. On 28 September 1880, at the age of 69, Édouard-Onésime Séguin died of dysentery in New York, at the Séguin Physiological School he founded.

The concept of education and therapy for people with disabilities developed by Édouard Séguin is called the *physiological method*. The author decided that the educational and therapeutic process should take into account the natural processes and development and functioning of the organism; while they are not correct due to the disability, everything must be done to restore a desired state in accordance with nature. The therapist should, in the course of their work, and in order of improved functions, imitate the natural, **physiological** development of the body.

The most accurate characterisation of the *principles* of the physiological method can be seen in a comment made by Séguin in one of his later American publications: “Training and education begin where previous functions and acquirements ceased. The beginning of the treatment of each child is where his natural progress stood still; so many children, so many beginnings.”³

In the physiological method, therapy starts with influencing the “peripheries” or “perimeter”, i.e. the body and the senses, which are directly accessible to our interactions. That is why Séguin developed an extensive system of gymnastic exercises that shape body movements and control them – first for the therapist and then for the child themselves⁴. On the same principle, Séguin applied a whole range of exercises and actions stimulating the senses, stimulating their sensitivity and organising the child’s sensory experience⁵. In the physiological method, only after a certain period of stimulation of the “peripheries” does the therapy move on to shaping the intellect and moral principles, and introducing the child into carrying out useful work. To this end, Séguin invented a whole range of toys and teaching aids to support the process of improving perception, shaping concepts and developing memory.

The question of the impact that Édouard Séguin’s ideas had on Maria Montessori seems obvious; both names are quite often mentioned together. Montessori herself was fully aware of these relations, and even emphasised their existence. In her most important work, titled *Casa dei Bambini*, she described in detail the history of her contacts with Séguin’s work and presented his influence on the development of her own ideas. Due to

³ SÉGUIN, E., *Idiocy and its treatment by the Physiological method*, New York 1866, p. 97.

⁴ SÉGUIN, E., *Traitement moral, hygiène et éducation des idiots (1846)*, Comité d’histoire de la Sécurité Sociale, Paris 1997, ch. XXXVII-XXXVIII.

⁵ *Ibidem*, ch. XXXIX.

the formal limitations of this text, and taking into account the fact that *Casa dei Bambini* is a widely-available publication, we will confine ourselves to quoting only a passage in which Montessori summarised her attitude towards Séguin's body of work and his own role in the chain of generations of educators:

Here lies the significance of my pedagogical experiment in the "Children's Homes." It represents the results of a series of trials made by me, in the education of young children, with methods already used with deficient children. My work has not been in any way an application, pure and simple, of the methods of Séguin [...]; But it is none the less true that, underlying these two years of trial, there is a basis of experiment [...] represents the earnest work of [...] Séguin. As for me, thirty years after the publication of Séguin's second book, I took up again the ideas and, I may even say, the work of this great man [...] Thus my ten years of work may in a sense be considered as a summing up of the forty years of work done by Itard and Séguin⁶.

The analysis of Séguin's impact on Ovide Decroly is a slightly more difficult task than in the case of Maria Montessori, since Decroly did not refer as directly to the links he had with Séguin. However, an in-depth analysis of Decroly's⁷ works shows that he was familiar with Séguin's concepts and used them to create his own pedagogical method.

Angéla Médici, in her fundamental and often-reprinted work *L'éducation nouvelle: ses fondateurs – son évolution* [*New Education: Its Founders – Its Evolution*] directly put forward the theory that the roots of the New Education movement lie in the achievements of Séguin and Itard:

Let us study the current aspects of the new pedagogy by analysing two similar works dating back to the early 20th century; on the one hand, we owe them to the Italian, Doctor Maria Montessori, on the other hand, to the Belgian Doctor Decroly. Both these works have their origin in the new scientific discipline that emerged one hundred years later on the basis of therapeutic work with disabled children. Let us first consider two of its creators, French physicians Itard and Séguin. Drawing on their therapeutic experiences, they laid the foundations for a method that would later be applied to healthy children. Montessori and Decroly, who also started with the teaching of disabled children, became continuators of this tradition; on the one hand, they relied on the techniques of their predecessors, and on the other, they invented new procedures, thus creating a new method of education that made them famous. We believe that the earliest, and at the same time the most perfect, use of New Education can be seen in the work of these four doctors⁸.

In a further part of her work, Médici clarified her theory, pointing out that each of the abovementioned pedagogues adapted different elements of Séguin's method for their ideas: Montessori relied to the greatest extent on exercises to develop the senses and con-

⁶ MONTESSORI, M., *The Montessori Method: Scientific Pedagogy as Applied to Child Education in 'The Children's Houses'*, trans. Anne. E. GEORGE, New York 1912, p. 45-46.

⁷ FETZKI, T., *Koncepcje Édouarda Séguina i ich znaczenie...*, p. 225-233.

⁸ MÉDICICI, A., *L'éducation nouvelle: ses fondateurs – son évolution*. Paris 1940, p. 95.

cepts, as well as the procedures for their application, while Decroly made the most effective use of Séguin's concepts of shaping the child's will and stimulating their activities.

Reception of Séguin's pedagogical concepts in the Second Republic of Poland

It would seem that, due to the absence of Édouard Séguin's achievements in science under his own name, the question of knowledge and practical application of his pedagogical methods in the Second Republic of Poland would boil down to the adoption and application of the concepts of Maria Montessori and Ovide Decroly. It turns out, however, that the creators of Polish special pedagogy of the interwar period, i.e. Maria Grzegorzewska and her co-workers, knew Séguin's work directly and thoroughly, and drew on it extensively.

With Poland regaining its independence in 1918, pedagogy in our country entered a new era and faced completely new challenges. The Polish educational system had to be created, which required carrying out the difficult task of unifying three diverse systems "inherited" from the partitioning states. It was necessary to unify the organisation of different levels of schools, curricula and vocational training systems for teachers.

While in the case of mass education, this was a difficult task, in the case of special education, the situation was even more complicated. Special education in our country was practically non-existent and had to be built almost from scratch⁹. Carrying out the task of creating a system of special education in the Second Republic of Poland is inseparably linked with Maria Grzegorzewska, whom Ewa Żabczyńska called a "classic of special pedagogy"¹⁰, while Kazimierz Pospiszyl¹¹ and Janina Doroszevska¹² did not hesitate to call her the "Creator of Polish special pedagogy".

Maria Grzegorzewska and her achievements have been the subject of numerous and insightful studies¹³, so there is no need to characterise this figure in depth. For the purposes of this analysis, it is worth mentioning and emphasising that in 1913, Grzegorzewska left for Brussels, where she began her studies at the Pedagogical Faculty, founded a year

⁹ Before 1919, there were of course activities in education of persons with disabilities in the Polish lands, and these initiatives were extremely interesting, but not very extensive. For more on the subject, see: GASIK, W., *Rozwój praktyki i teorii pedagogiki specjalnej w wieku XIX i w początkach XX wieku*, [in:] S. MAUERSBERG (ed.), *Dzieje szkolnictwa i pedagogiki specjalnej*, Warsaw 1990, p. 36-37. The newest findings in this area are contained in the study: SLASKA, E.M., FETZKI, T., *Eugenia Lublinerowa i jej dzieło; pogranicze biografii literackiej i monografii pedagogiczne*, [in:] *Przedmiot, źródła i metody badań w biografii*, ed. R. SKRZYNIARZ, L. DZIACZKOWSKA, D. OPOZDA (ed.), Lublin 2016, p. 453-465.

¹⁰ ŻABCZYŃSKA, E., *Przedmowa do drugiego wydania*, [in:] E. ŻABCZYŃSKA (ed.), *Maria Grzegorzewska, Pedagog w służbie dzieci niepełnosprawnych*, Warsaw 1995, p. 9.

¹¹ Ibidem, fragment of a review of the work, printed on the back cover.

¹² DOROSZEWSKA, J., *Pedagogika specjalna*, vol. I, Wrocław – Warsaw – Kraków 1989, p. 1.

¹³ See: E. ŻABCZYŃSKA (ed.), *Maria Grzegorzewska...*, TOMASIŃSKI, E., *Ocalić od zapomnienia... Maria Grzegorzewska w relacjach ze współczesnymi*, Warsaw 1998, E. DĄBROWSKA (ed.), *Stulecie urodzin Marii Grzegorzewskiej. Materiały sesji naukowej 18 IV 1988*, Warsaw 1990 and others.

earlier by Józefa Joteyko, a researcher of the Solvay Institute and a close collaborator of Ovide Decroly. Both women quickly developed a deep friendship that lasted to the end of Józefa Joteyko's life. Thanks to her friend and mentor, Maria Grzegorzewska personally met Decroly and his pedagogical views, including those concerning the methodology of teaching children with intellectual disabilities. As it would turn out in the future, they had a decisive influence on the formation of Grzegorzewska's own pedagogical views: the "centres of work" method she created is based on the fundamental assumptions of the Belgian's "centres of interest" method. Grzegorzewska repeatedly referred to Decroly's work and emphasised his influence on her work. Séguin's work must therefore also be considered to have marked Grzegorzewska's views, albeit indirectly.

However, as mentioned above, an analysis of Maria Grzegorzewska's writings shows that she knew Séguin's pedagogical concepts directly. What is more, she encountered them early on, got to know them thoroughly and valued many of the elements they contained.

Grzegorzewska, who gave such an important role to special pedagogy, described its creation in the following way:

At the beginning of the 19th century, the first works based on studies of abnormal children, mainly idiots, appeared. In 1801, the first work in this field was published in an outline by Itard, a student of Pinel, on the physical and psychological development of the 'Wild Boy of Aveyron'; in 1846, E. Séguin's work, *The Moral Treatment, Hygiene and Education of Idiots and other Backward Children*, was published, also in outline. [...] Gradually, dissertations on the physiology and psychology of abnormal children, the etiology of anomalies, studies of environmental impact and heredity began to emerge [...], new methods of education and teaching emerged, based on the results of studies of the physical and mental aspects of these children. The emphasis on sensory education¹ [the footnote contains the following text: "In his upbringing method, Séguin assumed that the upbringing of the senses had to precede the upbringing of the mind. He announced ingenious ways of methodical sensory training and gave detailed accounts of cases in which certain exercises were adapted to individual disabilities. In the second half of the 19th century, Bourneville, Itard and Séguin's successor, improved the meaning and developed the method of sensory education (Bicêtre near Paris). M. Montessori used this material in pre-school children's activities and exercises], far-reaching concretism, visualisation, developing of understanding instead of automation, independence instead of passivity and individualisation of upbringing all draw on the foundation of these works. [...] We know that M. Montessori applied the method used with the underdeveloped and abnormal in her work with the normal children from orphanages and nurseries and later to the children from her Children's Homes¹⁴.

Elsewhere, Grzegorzewska adds: "Édouard Séguin, after thirty years of work with the abnormal, came to the conclusion that a method based on an individual examination of the student, the progress of their education and an analysis of the physiological and men-

¹⁴ GRZEGORZEWSKA, M., "Znaczenie psycho-pedagogiki dziecka anormalnego w studjach nauczyciela", *Ruch Pedagogiczny* 1921, no. 1-5, p. 10-11.

tal symptoms should be applied to normal children (*Idiocy and its treatment by the physiological method*, New York, 1866).¹⁵

Maria Grzegorzewska presented the figure and work of Édouard Séguin to the students she worked with. Issue 3 and 4 of *Szkola Specjalna* [*Special School*] from 1928 was a monographic edition, devoted to the work of the *National Institute of Special Education*. Among the materials included are also detailed programmes of individual courses taught at the university. The syllabus for the course “History of the development and foundations of the organisation of special education for the mentally handicapped”, taught by Maria Grzegorzewska, included such issues as:

the genesis of education for the mentally handicapped. France as a promoter of the movement. [...] – The fate of insane people. A work by Pinel (1782). – Differentiation of idiotism and insanity Esquirol (1818). – Contemporary views of the essence of idiotism and the educational action’s attitude towards it. Itard’s Work (1783). – ‘The Wild Boy of Aveyron’. [...] Séguin’s work. The definition of idiotism and Séguin’s position on the teachability of idiots based on it. – Séguin’s works on the organisation and methodology of upbringing. – Séguin’s educational system and its basis. A comparison of the work of Itard and Séguin. The importance of Séguin’s work to special education. [...] Bourneville. His attitude towards Séguin’s work. The definition of idiotism. The educational system and teaching methods. The influence of teaching methods in special education on the development of normal children’s education methods¹⁶.

As we can see, the figure and achievements of Séguin hold a position of significance in the programme of lectures.

To conclude the analysis of Édouard Séguin’s influence on Maria Grzegorzewska, it is necessary to present one more of her texts, titled “The mutual influences of special and general pedagogy”¹⁷. It is not possible to give the exact date of its creation. It was published in the *Nowa Szkoła* monthly in 1971, but according to an editorial footnote, the article was written based on Maria Grzegorzewska’s posthumous papers and was prepared for printing by Janina Doroszevska¹⁸. An indication for dating the text may be a text by Sergey Hessen from 1937, which is very similar in terms of its theme¹⁹. Grzegorzewska’s study contains extremely important considerations, which will be cited in large fragments because of their importance for the subject under analysis, specifically because they clearly indicate that their author attributed great importance to the concepts of Édouard Séguin:

Thus, special pedagogy owes a lot to general pedagogy. [...] In order to get to know well the various inherited or acquired deficiencies of a disabled child, and use this as a foundation for the

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ GRZEGORZEWSKA, M., “Państwowy Instytut Pedagogiki Specjalnej”, *Szkola Specjalna* 1928, no. 3 – 4, p. 191.

¹⁷ GRZEGORZEWSKA, M., “Wzajemne wpływy pedagogiki specjalnej i ogólnej”, *Nowa Szkoła* 1971, no. 6, p. 2 – 7.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 2.

¹⁹ HESSEN, S., “Pedagogika specjalna i pedagogika ogólna”, *Szkola Specjalna* 1937/38, no. 1-5, p. 1-12.

adaptation of the method of compensatory and educational work, it had to be done with a good result on familiar ground. Dr Édouard Séguin, creator of the world's first school for mentally handicapped children, places significant emphasis on this [...] drawing attention to the need to observe the child at different moments of their life and work, as well as learning the results of medical examination relating to the child's physical development, general health and possible anomalies. [...] Séguin introduces, as a help in getting to know the child, a model of a child's individual notebook, as he calls it. In the individual notebook, the doctor and the teacher-pedagogue write down all data on the child, according to the points given in the notebook, considered by Séguin to be the most important. [...] It is a completely new thing in the pedagogical work, unknown, emphasising the importance of individualising childcare. The notebook also contains another completely new thing, namely data about the child's home environment, the conditions in which they live and grow up, about the influences on their development. Thus, Séguin calls the attention of teacher-pedagogues to the importance to getting to know a child of getting to know the conditions and character of the child's home environment, establishing permanent contact and cooperation with this environment by providing the parents or guardians with information, advice and tips on how they should deal with the child and how to care for them in order to improve the conditions for their physical and mental development²⁰.

In order to complete the picture of Édouard Séguin's influence on the emerging Polish pedagogy of people with intellectual disabilities, it is necessarily to thoroughly analyse, in addition to Maria Grzegorzewska's achievements, the work of one of her closest collaborators, Michał Wawrzynowski. He made a significant contribution to the development of teaching methods in schools for children with intellectual disabilities. Because he is almost unknown and unduly forgotten, disproportionate to the importance of his merits, as well as significant from the point of view of this analysis, the author considered it appropriate to outline his biography.

Michał Wawrzynowski (1899-1943) was born in Raba Wyżna. He came from an intelligentsia family and was the son of a teacher. During World War I, young Michał fought as a soldier of the 1st Brigade of the Polish Legions. After the war, he started studies in Warsaw and Vienna. After the Creation of the National Institute for Special Pedagogy, Wawrzynowski joined the institution for a long time, serving as a lecturer. He also became a close collaborator of the Institute's director, Maria Grzegorzewska.

The main field of Wawrzynowski's work concerned lectures on the methodology of teaching and educating the intellectually disabled, in which he presented, among others, issues of the scientific and social importance of educational care of the intellectually disabled, adaptability and self-sufficiency, educational tasks of special education, as well as the problems of physical and mental development of intellectually disabled people.

Wawrzynowski "applied his views on teach and upbringing in practice in his daily work at the Institute's 'School of Exercise', of which he was the administrative manager."²¹

Apart from his teaching work at the School of Exercise and his academic work at the Institute of Special Pedagogy, Michał Wawrzynowski was an active member of the

²⁰ GRZEGORZEWSKA, M., "Wzajemne wpływy...", p. 5-6.

²¹ MARCINKOWSKI, R., *Życie i działalność pedagogiczna Michała Wawrzynowskiego*, Unpublished master's thesis written under the supervision of Dr hab. W. Jamrożek, Poznań 1997.

Special Education Section, which was established in 1924 by the General Board of the Association of Public School Teachers. The section published the aforementioned *Szkola Specjalna* quarterly, where Wawrzynowski served as the responsible editor.

The Special Education Section organised two Special School Teachers' Meetings, during which Michał Wawrzynowski gave lectures: "Reading and writing by the Decroly method in application to the education of the mentally handicapped", which was the first attempt to adapt this method to Polish conditions, as well as "Tangential moments in the teaching and upbringing of various types of abnormal people", dealing with the issue of satisfying social needs in special education²².

From 1925, Michał Wawrzynowski performed the duties of a ministerial inspector for special education. In 1928-1935, he was also a deputy to the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, where he dealt with the issues of special schools and care of disabled children.

The outbreak of World War II changed the character of Wawrzynowski's pedagogical work. After the creation of the "Jerzyki" Insurgent Special Forces, he became head of civil education. Under the pseudonym "Znachor", he organised a special educational department in which students wrote periodic and promotional exams before a committee of teachers (of which he was often a member) delegated by the Department of Child and Youth Care²³.

In December 1942, Michał Wawrzynowski was arrested and imprisoned at the concentration camp in Majdanek, where he was murdered on 10 April 1943.

Like Maria Grzegorzewska, Michał Wawrzynowski used the principles of Ovide Decroly's method in his work. On its basis, he took steps to develop a curriculum for children with intellectual disabilities. It was the first attempt to adapt Decroly's achievements to Polish realities and experiences. The result of these activities was an article titled "The curriculum in a special school for the mentally handicapped", published in *Szkola Specjalna* in 1926²⁴, and five years later, published in book form as *Childcare of the mentally handicapped*²⁵. The Programme was divided into six levels, with the goal of gradually preparing a child with intellectual disabilities to participate in the surrounding social and natural reality. In the introduction to this work, Wawrzynowski noted:

The first attempts at this kind of care are extremely interesting and incredible for the development of teaching methods. Until now, in the field of education of the mentally handicapped, one needed to look for prototypes in the unforgettable work of the French physician Itard, and then his successors, Séguin and Bourneville. [...] Séguin [...] is actually the promoter of the movement of special education organisation not only in France and Europe, but also in America,

²² Ibidem, p. 109.

²³ MARCINKOWSKI, R., *Życie i działalność...*, p. 112.

²⁴ WAWRZYNOWSKI, M., "Program nauczania w szkole specjalnej dla upośledzonych umysłowo", *Szkola Specjalna* 1926, no. 1, p. 26-47, no. 2, p. 85-100, no. 3, p. 156-170. no. 4, p. 204-221.

²⁵ WAWRZYNOWSKI, M., *Opieka nad dziećmi upośledzonymi umysłowo*, Warsaw 1931.

where he spent half his life. To this day, some sensory exercises devised by Séguin are still used in education of the abnormal [...]”²⁶.

Wawrzynowski did not confine himself to the above general statements regarding Séguin’s contribution to the development of sensory therapy. In a later part of his work, he defined in detail which exercises he meant. In the “Sensory exercises” chapter, he wrote:

The most characteristic exercise of stereognostic sensation is Séguin’s bag, which can be used in two ways: the first consists in putting various objects into a bag; the child identifies and names the objects by tactile sensation, first directly (putting a hand into the bag and searching for the objects), and then indirectly (identifying the object through the fabric of the bag; the second consists of placing various objects on a table and covering them with a special barrier from behind which the child selects the given object. The latter way has the positive aspect of occupying all children simultaneously – they control the work and are very interested in whether their peer will find the object or not²⁷.

Wawrzynowski’s appreciation of Séguin’s methods is not only about sensory stimulation. In the chapter “Teaching the native language”, while discussing O. Decroly’s method of teaching reading, which was a starting point for his own method, Wawrzynowski noted: “Decroly’s reading method is visual and ideographic, taking the whole sentence as a starting point. This method is not entirely new, but we are not going top here over the previous attempts, because then we would have to read as far back as Itard”²⁸.

Additionally, in characterising the various stages of Decroly’s approach, he found that “a similar method had already been used by *Itard* and *Séguin* in abnormal education”²⁹.

The above note is unfortunately extremely enigmatic and not supported by bibliographic reference. However, characteristically, Maria Grzegorzewska expressed a similar view on the origins of global and multisensory methods of teaching reading. In the article “Deafblind”, which described cases of deaf-blind women – Laura Bridgeman and Helen Keller – whose therapy took place in a facility created by Dr Samuel Gridley Howe, Grzegorzewska wrote: “Therefore, *Dr Howe* should be given priority, next to *Itard* and *Séguin*, in the creation of the so-called global or syncretic reading”³⁰.

The data presented above shows that both Maria Grzegorzewska and Michał Wawrzynowski knew the pedagogical concepts of Édouard Séguin very well. The data also allows one to assume with a high degree of probability that Séguin’s concepts had a significant influence on the methodological views of Grzegorzewska and Wawrzynowski. As both of these figures played a significant, if not decisive, role in shaping the foundations of Polish pedagogy of the intellectually disabled in the interwar period, it is highly prob-

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 14.

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 120-121.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 92.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 94.

³⁰ GRZEGORZEWSKA, M., “Głuchociemni”, *Szkola Specjalna* 1927, no. 1, p. 20.

able that Édouard Séguin's achievements had a real impact on the development of Polish special pedagogy during that period. However, it was a "discreet" and somewhat "behind-the-scenes" influence, as officially, references to Ovide Decroly's theory and methods prevailed in the pedagogical literature of the time.

At the end of these reflections, the presence of Maria Montessori's work in Polish pedagogy of the interwar period should be discussed. For this purpose, it is worth to refer to the publication of Ewa Łatacz, where the issue was presented in detail. The author presented a gallery of authors of various specialties, dealing with the Montessorian subject matter³¹, presented a list of periodicals publishing articles on this issue (these were particularly journals dealing with pre-school pedagogy, such as *Przedszkole*, *Wychowanie Przedszkolne*, or *Zagadnienia Przedszkolne*, but others as well)³². She also listed and described pre-schools and other centres where the Maria Montessori method was used³³.

Ewa Łatacz showed that even before 1918, the Montessorian ideas were gradually filtering into Polish lands and were known to more and more educators³⁴. This permeation began around 1912³⁵. Maria Montessori's *Il metodo Della pedagogia scientifica applicato all'educazione infantile nelle case dei Balbini* was translated into Polish and published as *Domy dziecięce [Children's Homes]* in 1913 (although E. Łatacz notes that this was a translation made not from the original version but from the French translation and contained many inaccuracies and omissions)³⁶. The author lists the names of numerous figures connected with the process of reception of Mm. Montessori's pedagogical concepts in Polish pedagogy, such as A. Szycówna, J. W. Dawid, B. Żulińska, A. Gorzycka-Wieleżyńska and N. Cicimirska³⁷. However, she gave a special role to Aleksandra Gustowiczówna, the first Pole to participate in the Montessori course in Rome in 1914, who four years later (likely due to the ongoing war at the time) wrote an article describing the course and presenting the basic principles of Maria Montessori's method to the Polish reader³⁸.

Authors who dealt with the Montessori method in the Second Republic of Poland usually knew perfectly well how Édouard Séguin influenced the formation of Maria Montessori's pedagogical concepts. Barbara Żulińska, in a review of a book by Natalia Cicimirska, titled *My Preschool* (much of which was an attempt to adapt the Montessori method to Polish preschool) noted: "The author is particularly keen on applying the method of sensory training, especially learning about colours. There are many original ideas there, such as throwing balls at targets, parades with colourful figures, etc. In learning

³¹ ŁATA CZ, E., *Recepcja teorii pedagogicznej Marii Montessori w Polsce do roku 1939*, Łódź, 1996, p. 17 – 28, 32 and others.

³² Ibidem, p. 34.

³³ Ibidem, passim.

³⁴ Ibidem, p. 17-62.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 32.

³⁶ Ibidem, p. 47.

³⁷ Ibidem, passim.

³⁸ Ibidem, p. 26.

about colours, the author keeps to Séguin's method and considers it to be the only appropriate one"³⁹.

In an article published by the *Przedszkole* magazine, Zofia Żukiewiczowa stated: "Montessori transfers Séguin's method, created for underdeveloped children, into the 'children's home' for normal children"⁴⁰.

In the same periodical, Sergei Hessen published a study on the sources of Maria Montessori's pedagogical sources, in which he wrote: "Maria Montessori owes the development of her educational system, based on long-term studies of the child's body and her pedagogical experience, acquired through her work with developmentally delayed and handicapped children, to her physiologist's education and her doctor's profession. The student of Séguin and Itard, whose contribution was the development of educational systems for handicapped children with excellent results, had the idea – as she herself says – of using the same methods with normal children"⁴¹.

There are more similar notes. E. Łatacz notes: "Let us remember that M. Montessori, searching for substantive support in her work with children with special needs, reached the works of Itard and Séguin. The influence of these French psychiatrists was an important component of the Montessori method. Séguin provided not only some didactic aids, but also an important pedagogical principle, which was to 'guide the child as if by hand, from the development of the muscular and nervous system to the development of the senses.' For Montessori, this meant the transition from physical development to the development of consciousness, and from there to moral development. 'Séguin initially leads the handicapped to a vegetative life, and then to a conscious one; by developing the senses, he leads them to impressions, from impressions to concepts, from concepts to moral principles'. Montessori combined Séguin's principle with her 'polarisation of attention'. [...] Montessori wrote a lot about the influence of French psychiatrists on her own method. It was not without an influence on the reception of the work, all the more so that for many Polish teachers, the translation of *Il metodo...* [*Domy dziecięce* – T.F] was the primary source of information on Montessori's theory"⁴².

The observations made by E. Łatacz are fully in line with the arguments put forward by the author of this article, who believes that thanks to, among others, the mediation of Maria Montessori, the teaching concepts of Édouard Séguin did in fact penetrate and affect Polish pedagogy of the interwar period, the secondary question being whether Polish teachers were aware of these influences.

³⁹ ŻULIŃSKA, B., "Natalja Cicimirska: MOJA OCHRONKA", *Czasopismo Pedagogiczne* 1919/20, no. 4, p. 375.

⁴⁰ ŻUKIEWICZOWA, Z., "Froebel i Montessori", *Przedszkole* 1935/36, no. 7, p. 131.

⁴¹ HESSEN, S., "Źródło pedagogii Montessori, jej zasługi i niebezpieczeństwa", *Przedszkole* 1935, no. 3, p. 50.

⁴² ŁATACZ, E., *Recepcja teorii pedagogicznych...*, p. 94.

Conclusion

Summing up the issue of the reception of Édouard Séguin's pedagogical concepts in Polish pedagogy of the interwar period, it can be regarded as a proven and documented theory that, in the Second Republic of Poland, Édouard Séguin's pedagogical concepts reached Poland primarily through the use of Maria Montessori's and Ovide Decroly's methods, but that they also had a direct impact on the shaping of views of the people who most significantly contributed to the creation of the foundations of Polish special pedagogy. Moreover, these concepts still have a significant influence on the shape of contemporary general and special pedagogy in Poland.

Therefore, it is very important, in the opinion of the author of this text, to restore the awareness of the role and significance of the work of the great Burgundian educator to contemporary educators, therapists and psychologists.

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