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**PRESS & TELEVISION**

socialism, and encouraged the revival of Afro-American literature. A founder (1910) of the NAACP, he had tried repeatedly to launch an independently financed black journal. Although his early attempts were unsuccessful, his later efforts, including *The Moon Illustrated Weekly* (established 1905) and *Horizon* (1907), reached a wide audience. Both magazines, supported by subscriptions only, ridiculed Washington's "soulless" materialism. Du Bois's philosophy was simple: "If you are going to take up the wrongs of your race, then you must depend for support absolutely upon your race."

Du Bois's success, the authors conclude, spurred the establishment in 1911 of *Crisis* by convincing the rest of the NAACP leadership that a black journal could attract and retain a large readership while remaining independent of white financing or influence.

*Who Scoops Whom?* "Do Most People Depend on TV for News?" by Chris Welles, in *Columbia Journalism Review* (Jan.-Feb. 1978), 601  
Journalism Building, Columbia University, New York, N.Y. 10027.

Chronic Madison Avenue disputes over magazine "audience ratings" (used by publishers to determine readership and therefore advertising rates), recently flared up again when the two best-known survey firms—W. R. Simmons and Axiom Market Research—released sharply different findings. Simmons reported "hefty" readership gains, while Axiom claimed "major declines."

Welles, director of Columbia University's Bagehot Fellowship program, predicts that similar disagreements will arise among experts over the size of the audience for TV news.

According to surveys conducted by the Roper Organization, says Welles, television is by far the American public's main source of news—and TV's share of the news audience is growing steadily at the expense of newspapers. In 1976, Roper reported that 64 percent of those polled said they obtained "most" of their news from television. The figure in 1959 was 51 percent.

But Welles cites new research that calls the Roper findings into question: Two University of North Carolina professors, who have completed their own study, argue that the Roper polls measure "attitudes, not actual behavior." They contend that the number of people who watch any television on an average day is smaller than the number who read a newspaper. In fact, they find, on any given day, only 19 percent of their sample watched network television, while 80 percent read a newspaper. Welles adds that a 1972 Surgeon General's report found that, in fact, people watch television "less than is commonly believed—or than viewers themselves think." The Surgeon General's close study of 20 families revealed that they consistently "over-reported" their viewing time by about 50 percent.

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Television spokesmen have countered with contrary evidence and have questioned the methodology of the North Carolina study. Nevertheless, Welles contends, the "primacy" of television news can no longer be considered a "sacrosanct truth."

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**RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY**

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*Why Spinoza?*

"Why Spinoza Was Excommunicated" by Yirmiahu Yovel, in *Commentary* (Nov. 1977), 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

In 1656, Amsterdam's Jewish Council of Elders excommunicated a 24-year-old member of their community. His offense: He had proclaimed his view that the Bible was full of contradictions; that the laws of the Torah were arbitrary; that nature and God were one; and that knowledge of nature was therefore knowledge of God. Undaunted, the youth, Benedict Spinoza (1637-77), went on to formulate one of the most important metaphysical systems in the history of philosophy.

Yovel, a philosopher at Jerusalem's Hebrew University, believes that to understand the "phenomenon of Spinoza" one must understand his social and cultural environment. Living in the shadow of the Catholic Inquisition, Amsterdam's Jews were struggling to reintegrate the refugee Marranos into Judaism. (The Marranos were Spanish Jews who had "converted" to Christianity to avoid persecution but continued to practice Judaism in secret.) Dutch rabbis and elders were responsible for ensuring religious cohesion while maintaining the Jewish community as a shelter for the continuing stream of refugees from Spain. They demanded total obedience. At a less critical time, Yovel speculates,

*Philosopher Benedict Spinoza was excommunicated by Amsterdam's Jewish Council of Elders for doubting the Bible's veracity.*



*From Etika by Benedict Spinoza, St. Petersburg, 1886.*