

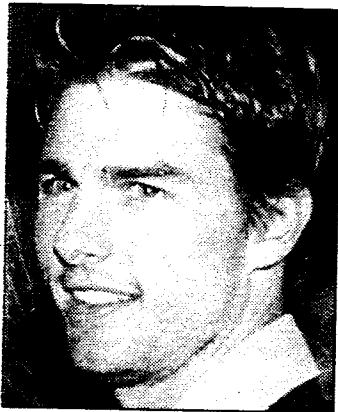
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Tom Cruise

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Scientologists face German boycott

THE Church of Scientology has attacked what it called "religious apartheid" in Germany after a Bavarian move to bar its members from public service and calls to boycott Tom Cruise's latest film because the star is a Scientologist.

In a communique issued in Bonn, the church said "officially-sanctioned religious apartheid" was "the result of years of unsubstantiated

emotional propaganda against the Church of Scientology and other religious minorities in Germany".

It was "incredible" and "blatant hypocrisy" that the Christian Democratic Union, led by Chancellor Helmut Kohl, should seek to deny public office to Scientologists while accusing the church of being undemocratic.

"In the face of this arro-

gance they need to be reminded that this is 1996 and not 1936," the communique said, referring to Germany's Nazi past.

The CDU last week stepped up a long-running campaign against the Scientologists, accusing them of using criminal means for unconstitutional, totalitarian ends and proposing to deny it religious status.

The party's youth wing

yesterday launched a boycott of the film *Mission: Impossible* because its star and co-producer Tom Cruise is a Scientologist, on the basis that film proceeds would thus go to the church.

Cruise's wife Nicole Kidman and *Pulp Fiction* star John Travolta are also devotees of the religion founded in 1950 by science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard.

The Bavarian regional

government also yesterday decided that from November 1 all candidates for a civil service post would have to declare they were not a member of the Church of Scientology.

Christian Democrat parties in other regions have called for a nationwide ban, along similar lines to a law in the 1970s in western Germany directed against communists.

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