

Anti-fascist editor cleared of violence

Sarah Boseley

THE case against an anti-fascist magazine editor accused of threatening unlawful violence at a far right meeting, collapsed yesterday at Southwark crown court when the prosecution said it would offer no further evidence.

On the fourth day of the trial, Judge Eugene Cotran directed the jury to enter a verdict of not guilty to the charge against Gerry Gable, editor of Searchlight, arising from a meeting in Kensington library in May last year at which Jeffrey Ham, a former follower of the British fascist leader, Oswald Mosley, was to speak.

Gary O'Shea, aged 37, of Wembley, north-west London, was acquitted of the same charge on the judge's direction and of stealing a Union flag.

He agreed to be bound over to keep the peace in the sum of £50 for six months on a charge he did not admit, of kicking a policeman, so that proceedings could be halted. Both defendants were granted costs.

Outside the court, Mr Gable,

aged 55, of Romford, Essex, said the case should never have been brought, and claimed he was being victimised for investigating the security services.

"If somebody out there has got such an elitist view of this world that they think they can silence the work of Searchlight by removing its editor, they are wrong," he said.

The case was brought after Mr Gable attended the meeting as a journalist. It was alleged that around 60 people invaded the meeting without tickets, took over the auditorium and beat up two men who had come to listen.

Stephen Clayton, for the Crown, said it was quite apparent the prosecution had not proved its allegation that Mr Gable had exerted control over those engaged in violent acts.

"Indeed, there has been from more than one prosecution witness a suggestion that Mr Gable . . . moved to stop the violence."

Judge Cotran told the jury they should not think the verdict "condoned in any way any attempt to disrupt by violence meetings of this nature, however repulsive they may be."