

A 'Newspaper Reader' Is Beaten

For some reason — whether high principle or pure mulish stubbornness — Fred Rosti, 25, continued reading his newspaper when the policesweep began through Union Square yesterday.

Throngs of young people rushed past him in confused flight, mounted police cantering after them swinging their clubs like polo mallets.

Just behind them came the jump-suited, helmeted, visored ranks of the Crime Prevention Unit, formerly called the Tactical Squad.

Rosti, a tall, slender man who belongs to the War Resister's League, sat with nose buried in the paper reading who knows what.

THUMP

"MOVE" one of the cops said, jerking him to his feet and giving him an admonitory thump across the shoulder blades with his nightstick.

"I'm reading my newspaper," Rosti replied. Three officers gave him a good going over, their clubs rising and falling in blurs.

Rosti lowered the arms he had used to cover his head and started at the ring of cops around him. "MOVE." There was a pause and the clubs began another tattoo.

GROIN

"Look..." he began mildly, blood beginning to run

down his face. One of the muscular cops, holding his club with two hands, thrust it into Rosti's groin.

After he unbent from that shot, another officer approached from the side and, holding the can maybe six inches away, squirted Mace into his face.

That did it. That and another wallop on the shoulder blades and a big push toward the fleeing crowd.

A few minutes later, Rosti was telling a reporter why he chose to take his punishing stand. "I was just sitting

there reading my newspaper. I wasn't violating any laws and I'm not going to be a part of a police state."

HEED

In truth, however, he was. The crowd had been declared an unlawful assembly and ordered to disperse. Refusal to heed such an order is a misdemeanor.

Right after Rosti got his beating, a young woman with shorts and pale legs got what can only be called an unmerciful drubbing from another policeman.

He whacked her on the

head, over the body and pursued her, slashing away at her bare legs as she stumbled toward safety.

The Bay Area April 22nd Coalition, which sponsored the demonstration, charged the police department with "brutally attacking" a peaceful demonstration.

The organization demanded that disciplinary action be taken against the police department and said it will go to court Monday seeking damages and an injunction against the city "for denial of our constitutional rights."