

Brain Surgery Plan Debated

The proposal that brain surgery be used to control the violently aggressive behavior of some prison inmates was merely an "idea concept . . . brought up for discussion," a top research official of the State Department of Corrections insisted yesterday.

However, almost immediately, Lawrence Stutsman, the department's chief deputy director, told a large and highly articulate group in Berkeley that the proposed program is "out (because) we never got the money."

Last September 8, Corrections Director Raymond Procnunier asked the California Council for Criminal Justice for a \$48,000 federal grant to finance surgical treatment of the state's most destructive prison inmates. The request was turned down by the Council because the proposal was considered "undeveloped."

At yesterday's discussion meeting at Unitas House, a Presbyterian college community center at Bancroft Way and College Avenue, the Committee on Neuropsychiatric Experimentation on Prisoners explored various phases of the proposal.

PLANNING

Dr. Larry Bennett, the Corrections Department's chief researcher, said the

whole concept of brain surgery for violent prisoners was in the "planning stage."

"We are still studying how to deal with unusual aggression," he said. "Our aim is to examine volunteer inmates to find out what kinds of problems can be identified."

"It's quite likely that we will not proceed with this, but if we had unlimited funds we would explore every opportunity to help anyone who wants such assistance."

MINDS

Alameda county Superior Judge Lionel Wilson was highly critical of the proposed surgical procedures. "I am deeply concerned," he said, "that human beings are going to have their minds operated on . . ."

Professor John Irwin, of the San Francisco State College sociology department, declared that the Corrections Department is "primarily concerned with controlling convicts."

"In the '50s and '60s," he said, "the department developed successful techniques like the indeterminate sentence system. Persons had to conform or they wouldn't get out."

"Then they came up with the idea of adjustment centers. But by the end of the '60s, a rage was developing and the department began searching desperately for new techniques of control.

This brain surgery proposal was one of the techniques."

LOBOTOMIES

Dr. Walter Freeman Sr., a retired Sunnyvale neurosurgeon, told the group he had performed numerous lobotomies, in which the frontal lobe of the brain is severed, and he said only those who suffer from fear or torment should be chosen for the operation.

He said he had operated on two patients at Atascadero State Hospital who, after the operations, "lost their fear and hate and became noticeably friendly."

The whole discussion proved infuriating to two former prison inmates, one black and one white, who spat obscenities at most of the speakers, accusing them of "playing with our minds."

waged by my people was something far more important than a doctoral dissertation," she said.

Settling on the West Coast, she joined the Los Angeles chapter of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee. When that folded, she joined the Che Lumumba Club, a black-oriented Marxist collective inside the Communist party.

"Only a Socialist orientation is going to really allow black people to discover a real authentic relation," she said.

In July, 1968, she joined the Communist party. That same year, she earned her masters degree from the University of California at San Diego. She was then hired as an instructor in philosophy at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Later, when accused of

Communist party membership, she chose to admit it.

She did so, she said, "because I felt I had a certain responsibility to do it. I felt that it was time that we assumed aggressive postures in the face of repression."

The issue changed her life.

"It created a situation where I couldn't even go shopping," she said. "All kinds of nuts and racists would pursue me in a number of ways. At U.C.L.A., hardly a day would pass that a death threat wouldn't come in."

In June, 1970, Miss Davis was notified that her contract at U.C.L.A. would not be renewed. She remembers that day well.

She said she recalled being at a demonstration on behalf of the Soledad Brothers, three black convicts accused of killing a white guard, and marching with Jonathan Jackson, the 17-year-old brother of George Jackson.

In less than three months, Jonathan Jackson would trigger a shoot-out which was to lead to her imprisonment, by smuggling guns into a courtroom at the Marin County Civic Center.

In the shooting, four per-

sons, including a judge, were killed. The police said the guns smuggled into the courtroom had been purchased by Miss Davis.

After a nationwide search, Miss Davis was arrested in New York City. There was wide-spread speculation that she was attempting to leave the country, but in the interview she denied it.

"That's probably what they [the authorities] wanted," she said, "but to leave like that, I'd have been untrue to my own principles."

She said that she had gone into hiding because she thought that it would have been dangerous to turn herself in to people who, she said, had already decided they were going to be my executioners."

She would not discuss the shooting incident except to say she was not guilty of the charges.

San Jose, where Miss Davis will be tried, has a black population of less than 2 per cent.

"If that whole slogan of fair trial has any meaning," she said, "it's precisely at this point, where it's so clear that the stage is being set for just a complete railroad."