

WOMEN supporting women
PURPLE UP
 for Uppity Thursday
 Oct. 10
 WOMEN helping

Purple up

An Open Letter to All Women on Campus

By this time, women on this campus may have seen new bathroom graffiti. "Purple up" stickers began appearing in various locations on campus last Monday. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to wear purple on Thursday, October 10. Our intent, as women, is to support other women and to show that support for each other symbolically by wearing purple on October 10.

The purple is inspired by Distinguished Guest Lecturer, Dale Spender, who has been speaking to audiences on campus for the last ten days. She is an internationally renowned feminist author interested in "the ways in which women's ideas have been shaped, distorted and sometimes erased as a consequence of their less powerful position in the social construction of knowledge and meaning."

And, her entire wardrobe is purple. She says that through women's history, there is constant reference to purple, in its various shades, as a color full of symbolic signifi-

cance for women.

During the last century, purple was worn by a variety of women in Britain and North America, often for different reasons, but always in association with women's strength. Virginia Woolf makes reference to women wearing purple in her work and Mrs. Pankhurst, a leading suffragette, wore purple.

Often women who wore purple were considered "uppity women," and uppity being a woman being a woman presumptuous enough to say that she didn't like being abused, or patronized, or in any other way treated as less than an equal. Since "uppity" has unpleasant connotations, the word was used to discourage women from speaking out about unequal and unfair treatment. It is important, then, that we take back the word and make it positive.

"Purple up" on October 10 for women helping women, supporting women — become an "uppity woman" — and together we can make the world a better place for all who dwell here.

Committee for Purpling Up

Dale Spender — wo

by Ann Grever

Dale Spender is a feminist who has fun. She wears only purple. Purple earrings, purple glasses, purple stockings.

"Women have used purple as symbolic color to identify solidarity. The Pankhursts wore purple. The suffragettes wore purple. There have been different reasons to wear purple but the color has always been purple.

"I wear it as a protest against men. Clearly it doesn't work as my nephew tells me

got interrupted all the time by my male colleagues. They kept on saying that what I was doing was not good. It was a delight in a sense because I was doing a thesis on (how men interrupt women and do all the talking and) I couldn't get a chance to put my case. So I wrote an article in the *Times* and it was published. I named them all and they lived in fear and dread after that, that I would do it again."

"There are ways to do it but you have to

"Women are always the poorest in the poorest countries. Women are the ones who get fed last, even in Ethiopia."

they're still around.

"I wear it partly because there is so little symbolism in women's lives, and partly because I'm eccentric and partly because it's a damned sight easier — everything goes with everything else."

The color suits her. Spender has serious reasons for wearing purple and she wears purple without exception — she even writes in purple ink — but she enjoys being noticeable and bright.

She enjoys the women's movement in the same way.

Spender is the author of books with such angry titles as *Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them*. But for those women who want to enjoy fighting for their rights, she is a joy to listen to and to talk to.

She laughs a lot.

"Men are unused to being criticised. Women are used to being harassed, dismissed. Men are absolutely used to being acknowledged as superior beings. I stand there and say, I think you're silly. They can't take that. Margaret Atwood wrote a short story and she said men are frightened of being laughed at and women are frightened of being killed. I think that sums it up.

Spender will not give an inch.

"I would never ask a man to please do anything because the answer would be no. You put the fear of God into them and then they'll do it. . . I can't be dismissed. I wrote articles in the newspaper about how silly they are. I don't do that out of malice or spite. I do that when I've got some decent evidence.

"When I was the University of London I

have a power base to do it from. I'm exposing some of the silly things that are opposed to scholarship and are biased against women.

"There are no reasons to trust men. They have the power. I have to be very careful calling men silly. I would never do that without a couple of women whom I knew with me. I've been physically threatened in lecture theatres on campuses.

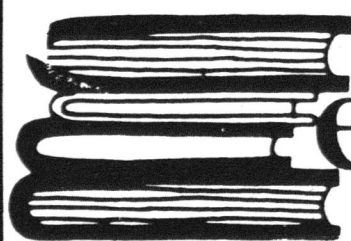
"Even the other night I had one man pushing my shoulder and if I had not had a couple of women nearby that I know very well now and could have called to assistance, I'd have been quite nervous."

In spite of the growing feeling of conservatism, and declining activism on the part of women, Spender does not feel women have yet a fair deal.

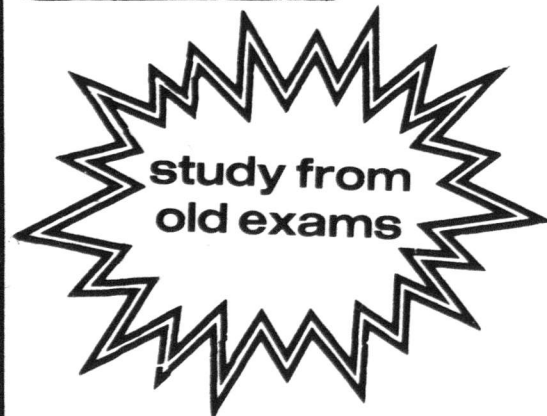
"If men earn 99 per cent of the world's resources and women earn one per cent, I don't think that is terribly fair. I'm not

"Every 50 years there is an explosion... Every 50 years women are inv"

greedy, but I want more. I want women not to be so poor. You and I are very atypical. Most of the world's women live in poverty without hardly enough food to eat and are trying to feed children. Women are always the poorest in the poorest countries. Women are the ones who get fed last, even in Ethiopia.



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**DEADLINE:
 Oct 15/85 4:30 pm**