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Peaceful protest against Roosh V turns into rally against sexism and rape culture

"Glasgow has shouted back and started a global mainstream conversation about rape culture and sexism", says protest organiser Vonny Moyes.



On Saturday night the peaceful protest against gatherings of fans of controversial antifeminist Roosh V went down as somewhere between 200 and 300 people gathered at George Square from 8pm.

The event went on in spite of the man known as Roosh V cancelled the international meetups on the 3 February, and consisted of speeches from three prominent local activists and feminists, Vonny Moyes, Stella Rooney and Anna Hodgart.

The journalist, campaigner and organiser of the protest, Moyes decided not to speak about Roosh V because she felt that the protest had grown into something much bigger:

"This isn't about him, this isn't one man. That one man has become a symbol and through being that symbol he has started a very necessary public conversation – a conversation that we've been having a long time that we haven't felt comfortable enough to start with the public. And people are talking about gender and sexual violence, the problem of rape culture."

She went on to appeal to the gathered supporters to continue to stand up together against misogynist oppression.

The following speakers also turned the crowd's attention to the importance of bringing sexism and rape culture into public discussion. Activist Stella Rooney stated: "Whether it be being out on a Saturday night and getting harassed by a man twice your age or being told that you can't do certain subjects at school because you are girl, we all experience sexism on a daily basis."

Rooney added that it was a conversation long overdue because one in five women experience sexual violence and said: "This is not something that should be hidden."

Anna Hodgart from TYCI, a feminist art collective, emphasized the importance of showing solidarity and creating alliances with others. Hodgart added that the fact so many men came to show their support showed that "it is not just a women's issue, it is a matter of injustice in our communities. As the saying goes –if there is injustice for one of us, there is injustice for all of us".

Following the speeches, the protesters marched peacefully through Buchanan Street.

Although Roosh V aborted the meetups, the event gave rise to a campaign advocating a new law to ban hate speech against women. Rape Crisis Scotland, Scottish Women's Aid and Moyes herself initiated the bid for new legislation. About this issue Scottish Women's Aid stated:

"If our current laws cannot sanction this kind of incitement to commit an offence, then we need new laws."