Blood On The Crown – a film from Malta and its Historical synergy with Indian History

Film Review: *Blood on the Crown*
Directed by Davide Ferrario | Starring Harvey Keitel, Malcolm McDowell, Tom Prior

Blood on the Crown (originally titled *Just Noise*) is a historical drama that brings to screen one of the most pivotal yet underrepresented events in Malta's history—the Sette Giugno (June 7) uprising of 1919. With an international cast and a subject deeply rooted in national identity, the film aims to spotlight a moment of civil unrest that marked the Maltese people's resistance to British colonial rule.

Historical Context

The film recounts the events surrounding June 7, 1919, when British troops opened fire on unarmed Maltese civilians protesting inflation, food shortages, and political marginalization under colonial administration. The uprising resulted in the deaths of four Maltese citizens and galvanized the movement for greater self-governance, which would eventually lead to Malta's independence decades later. It was presented by Reuben Gauci, High Commissioner of Malta in India on 1st May, 2025 to celebrate 60 years of Malta-India diplomatic relations and also to mark 106 years of Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the June 7 uprising in Malta, parallel events from the contemporary history of the two countries.

Story and Execution

Blood on the Crown attempts to balance dramatic storytelling with historical accuracy. The narrative alternates between perspectives—those of local protestors, British administrators, and foreign journalists—giving viewers a panoramic sense of the tensions on the island. Tom Prior plays a young journalist who uncovers the human cost of colonial suppression, while screen veterans Harvey Keitel and Malcolm McDowell lend weight to the roles of the high-ranking officials caught between imperial duty and conscience.

The film succeeds in portraying the injustice and brutality of colonial authority, especially in scenes depicting the shooting of protestors and the desperate attempts of civilians to assert their dignity. However, some aspects of the script feel overly expository, and at times the emotional resonance is undercut by uneven pacing and production constraints.

Visuals and Atmosphere

Shot on location in Malta, the film leverages its historical setting beautifully. Narrow streets, baroque architecture, and sunlit piazzas add authenticity to the period setting. The cinematography is evocative, though the limited budget occasionally shows in crowd scenes and action sequences that could have benefited from more scale or realism.

Cultural Impact

For a Maltese audience, *Blood on the Crown* is more than just a film—it's a cinematic reckoning with national trauma and pride. By dramatizing a moment often relegated to textbooks, the film contributes to a broader international awareness of Malta's struggle for sovereignty and the sacrifices made along the way.

Verdict

While not without its flaws, *Blood on the Crown* is a bold and important film that sheds light on a forgotten chapter of colonial resistance. It serves as a tribute to those who stood up against oppression and is a meaningful addition to the limited canon of Maltese historical cinema.

Rating: 3.5/5