Las 13 Rosas (13 Roses) is a 2007 Spanish film directed by Emilio Martínez Lázaro. It stars Pilar Lopez de Ayala, Verónica Sánchez and Marta Etura.

The film is based on real-life events. It tells the story of 13 young women who were sentenced to death by a military court for a crime they had not committed: an attack on a military official during the first years of Franco's dictatorship in which three people died. The women were already in jail when the assault took place.

Inspired by the facts told in the book “Thirteen red roses” by Carlos Fonseca about the story of Las Trece Rosas, the script is by writer Ignacio Martínez de Pisón.

It was filmed in the Segovian town of Vegas de Matute, as well as in Toledo, Madrid and Alcalá de Henares.

On September 14, 2007, it was preselected by the Spanish Film Academy along with two others, Luz de Domingo and El Orfanato, to represent Spain at the Oscars. However, it was later announced that the chosen film for these awards would be “The Orphanage”.

In Madrid in 1939 during the final days of the Spanish Civil War, Virtudes and Carmen, two young idealistic Republican militants, are encouraging their neighbours to keep faith in the cause of the Republic.

Julia, a streetcar attendant, and her friend Adelina, a Red Cross worker, are also active sympathizers of the Spanish Republic. While spending an evening in a nightclub watching musicians perform, one of the last bombings of the city takes place. In those dire circumstances they befriend Blanca, whose husband Enrique is the musicians’ band leader.

The triumph of the Francoist troops marks a dark turning point in the lives of those who sympathized with the Republic. Canepa, one of the musicians in Enrique’s band, is a Republican militant. Fearing for his life, he decides to leave the country. Blanca, Enrique’s wife, gives him some money to help him on his way.
It is rumored that there was a plot to assassinate Franco on his victorious entry into the capital, and the nationalists are seeking revenge. Although the girls have nothing to do with it, they have been targeted for their propagandistic leftist activities. The first to be arrested is Julia, who, before too long, is being sadistically tortured by the orders of Fontenla, the cold-hearted officer in charge of the interrogations. Adelina is turned in by her well-meaning father in the naïve belief that nothing serious will happen to her and that she is just wanted for questioning.

Canepa and Teo are turned in by friends and neighbors and are tortured. Canepa commits suicide while under arrest. Teo has better luck and is eventually released on the condition that he has to secretly help to identify and capture his friends, sympathizers of the Republic. With Teo’s help, one by one the girls are arrested, and soon they have all been jailed. Only Carmen, the youngest of the girls of the group, realizes Teo’s double-crossing, but she is also arrested. Blanca also suffers the same fate. After suffering heavy police interrogations, the young group of women are eventually transferred to an overcrowded prison.

The reunion of the girls in jail serves as a consolation to their dire circumstances. At one point, they even enjoy a bit of tap-dancing. Their families, including Adelina’s grief-stricken father, are hoping that they will eventually be released. Blanca is worried about her small son that she was forced to leave behind.

The fate of the 13 young women is sealed when two military officers and an innocent woman are killed in cold blood by a group of leftist revolutionaries. As a punishment, the regime orders the execution of some of the prisoners, though they have nothing to do with what has happened while they are in jail. A military court condemns the 48 men and 13 young women to death in less than 48 hours.

Carmen, the youngest of all, is the only survivor of the group. Desolated, she listens to the shots that killed her terrified friends.
MAIN CAST

Pilar López de Ayala – Blanca
Verónica Sánchez – Julia
Marta Etura – Virtudes
Nadia de Santiago – Carmen
Gabriella Pession – Adelina
Félix Gómez – Perico
Fran Perea – Teo
Enrico Lo Verso – Canepa
Adriano Giannini – Fontenla
Goya Toledo – Carmen Castro
Asier Etxeandia – Enrique
Bárbara Lennie – Dionisia
Arantxa Aranguren – Manuela
María Cotiello – Elena
Alberto Ferreiro – Valentí
María Isasi – Trini
Luisa Martín – Dolores
Secun de la Rosa – Satur
José Maria Cervino – Jacinto
MAIN THEMES

The Spanish Civil War
Dictatorship
Female Solidarity

QUESTIONS

1. Describe one of the protagonists and explain their role in the development of one of the themes of the film.
2. How do the stylistic techniques help us to understand the main theme of the film?
3. Examine the importance of the social and cultural environment in the film.
4. To what extent do you admire the director you have studied? Justify your opinions.
5. “The work of a great director always shows us individuality and profound ideas.” Do you think that the film shows these two qualities?
6. Which of the three women has the biggest impression on you? Why?
7. Analyse the atmosphere of revenge in the film.

REFERENCES

https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Las_13_rosas_(pel%C3%ADcula)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Las_13_rosas