The theme of the World Congress of Women in Moscow from 23-27 June 1987 was “Toward 2000 — Without Nuclear Weapons: For Peace, Equality, Development.” There were 2800 women delegates from 154 countries; and 800 national and 73 international, non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and 15 UN organizations. The Congress was sponsored by the Women’s International Democratic Federation (WIDF), with headquarters in Berlin, German Democratic Republic. There were 103 delegates from Canada, including 17 from B.C., representing a wide range of organizations.

Mikhail Gorbachev addressed the opening session, stressing his glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring) policies, and seemed to be sympathetic to women’s concerns. Freda Brown, the President of WIDF, chaired the session, and gave the opening address.

The session closed with an enthusiastic performance by young people.

There were eight Commissions which functioned daily at the Congress: Women for Peace and Disarmament; Women in Society; Women and Work; Women, Children and Families; Women’s Involvement in the Struggle for National Liberation, Independence and Self-Determination; Problems of Development and Women; Mass Media and Women; The Role and Cooperation of NGOs in Implementing the Forward-looking Strategies Adopted in Nairobi in the Summer of 1985.

Three discussion Centres functioned parallel to the Commissions. In one there were Hearings on violations of women’s rights. The Centre on “Women and Socialism” provided information on the life of women in socialist countries, and an opportunity to talk with some of them. The third Centre functioned as a topic for exchange of views among delegates.