

A Word With You

By **ROBERT CLANCY**

Everything came off almost perfectly at the opening of the 1952 Olympic Games in Finland. All the protocol was as it should be. Only two incidents marred the occasion. One was the driving rain.

The other incident was the unscheduled appearance of a girl in flowing robes who burst upon the scene and began to plead for peace.

Of course she was stopped. Barbara Rotraut-Pleyel, as she is named, claimed she was an idealist. Surely she had evidence on her side, but the authorities said that she's either crazy or a Communist.

The Communists have disowned her, and besides, I refuse to accept a plea for peace as proof of Communism. So then she's mad. But did she not select a good occasion for her appeal? Here were the nations of the world assembled for friendly competition. What better time and place to catch them in the right mood?

And why must a plea for peace be whisked out of the way just because it isn't on the program? It would be but hypocritical to deny the tension and turmoil the nations are in today. Can all this be stilled by parades and torches?

Barbara was from Germany. It seems to me they should have given a German a chance to do something to help redeem the atrocities of that country a few years ago, especially when such a noble gesture was offered. Everyone agreed she looked like an angel of peace.

When the sun dries the field of the Helsinki stadium, people can forget the rain. But can they forget the girl who ran across the field to the microphone? She sounded an alarm which will not be stilled by sending her away.

There was something Grecian about Barbara's demonstration—appropriate for the Olympics. If she is mad, it is the madness of Antigone who refused to accept a political dictum when something greater was at stake:-

"Because it was not Zeus who ordered it,
Nor Justice, dweller with the Nether
Gods,
Gave such a law to men; nor did I
deem
Your ordinance of so much binding
force,
As that a mortal man could overbear
The unchangeable unwritten code of
Heaven."

Such madness is needed when sanity accepts too completely the world as it is and offers only the forms, with only speeches about the spirit; and when the code of Heaven is thought to be a ceremony.

I cast my vote for Barbara.