

"I AM AN AMERICAN" DAY EXERCISES

BALTIMORE STADIUM

May 17, 1942

Baltimore

TODAY'S observance, of which this gathering is a part, symbolized by the simple motto, "I Am An American," is both timely and significant. Its creed is certified by its motto. Its appeal being made to the common love of Country, its growth will no doubt soon achieve avalanche proportions. Within a few weeks we may expect to hear the echo of its activities from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

As this effort grows and progresses, it will serve both to separate and stimulate; separate the true American from the false; stimulate the zeal of its members and their kindred in the defense of our native land. It is because of these and similar considerations that I am glad to be here to bring the endorsement of Maryland people.

Never in our entire history has there been a greater need for patriotic rededication than faces us today. Literally, at least for the time being, we and our Allies are fighting against staggering odds. On all the continents and each of the seven seas, the mightiest military aggregation the world has ever known has put to challenge, under threat of destruction, every right, privilege, and liberty we have heretofore known and enjoyed. This threat covers our way of life in all its phases—economic, political, social and religious.

Under such a threat to the security of our Nation, we must lay aside every other consideration than that which will make for a stronger National unity. Questions of racial origin, of religion, and of class have no place in America, where every citizen is guaranteed to be equal before the law. The newly naturalized citizen has acquired an equal share in the great reservoir of rights and privileges which accrue to American citizenship. Consequently there must be unified effort and steadfast adherence to American principles by everyone if we are to present a solid front in defense of this greatest of all assaults.

Never think that our freedom and our independence were easily obtained. They were purchased with the blood of our fighters, the sweat of our workers and the unselfish contributions of our citizens in times past. Furthermore, don't presume that these things will always be ours just because we now possess them. What was bought by toil and sacrifice and blood must be retained with the same eternal coinage. The amount we must pay will be higher because the stakes today are more than our ancestors ever dreamed of. This is a global war and so the measure of our effort must be vast, indeed. Blood and sweat and sacrifice to a degree never calculated before must be paid by us to secure the blessings willed to us by our forefathers.