

# 3 June 1906 – 3 June 2006

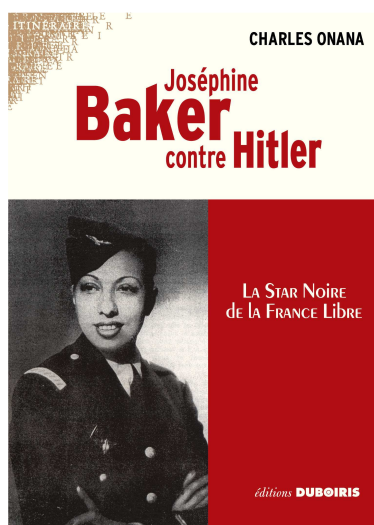
## Josephine Baker's centenary

To commemorate Josephine Baker's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the investigative journalist Charles Onana publishes an unprecedented biography relating the role the African American artist played by the side of General de Gaulle during World War II and on her fight against racism in France and in the U.S.A. along with Martin Luther King.

### Josephine Baker against Hitler

*The black star of Free France*

Paris, Editions Duboiris, 2006, 160 pages, 15 Euro



An international music-hall star and an unrivalled figure of Casino de Paris and Champs-Élysées theatre, Josephine Baker was the first French black artist who deeply touched the heart of the French people with her popular songs, her beauty and her angelic voice during the 1930s.

When France was attacked by Adolph Hitler in 1940, the Star decided to abandon her artiste's costume to join the French Resistance. As an antiracism activist and wife of a Jew, Baker refused to see Paris under the heel of the Nazis. She entered the counter-espionage as early as 1939 and became the propaganda agent of General de Gaulle at the risk of her life. She gave numerous concerts to collect funds for the French army and helped the French intelligence service to obtain precious information on Mussolini's plans and on the Germans' secret projects. In 1942 in Morocco, she was strongly opposed to the apartheid separating black and white soldiers in the American army. Second lieutenant Josephine Baker was thus one of the first famous Parisian artists to fight against German occupation and Nazis in France and in Africa.

After two years of investigation, the journalist Charles Onana has found army, police and FBI records which testify to the great fight Josephine Baker led against Hitler, Nazis and racism. After the war, she continued to carry on an international struggle against racism and adopted children of all colours. Her commitment and the stands that she took against racism made her be unwelcome in the U.S.A., the country where she was born. Nevertheless, she did march at the side of Martin Luther King for civil rights and for equality between blacks and whites in Washington.

The star was awarded the medal of the Resistance, the Legion of Honour and the Military Cross for her heroic sacrifices in France. It is a rather unusual list of honours for a black woman in France. She has particularly marked the history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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