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## Cut-Outs, Caste and Cine-Stars: The World of Tamil Politics

By Vaasanthi

Penguin, New Delhi, India, 2008. Paperback. Book Condition: New. First Edition. Tamil Nadu is a state very different from the rest of India, both culturally and historically. It has retained a fundamentally separate identity for itself in language and caste structure, and this is most evident in its politics. Cut-outs, Caste and Cine Stars: The Word of Tamil Politics tells a political story that has all the elements of a blockbuster film, where ironies and larger-than-life characters abound: Periyar, a Kannada-speaker, who introduced the notions of Tamil self-respect and regional pride, yet dismissed Tamil as a barbaric language; the matinee idol MGR, a Malayalee born in Sri Lanka, who became Tamil Nadus most popular mass leader; the Dravidian movement which, by its own ideology, should have helped the Dalits but has instead supported only the upwardly mobile middle groups; and parties that rose to power by propagating anti-Hindi and anti-Brahmin sentiments but have now allied themselves with the BJP. It is fitting that this reel-like scenario is presently dominated by the electoral politics of Karunanidhi and Jayalalithaa, one a scriptwriter and the other a former actress. Through all this, the author discusses the successes and pitfalls of politics in the...



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