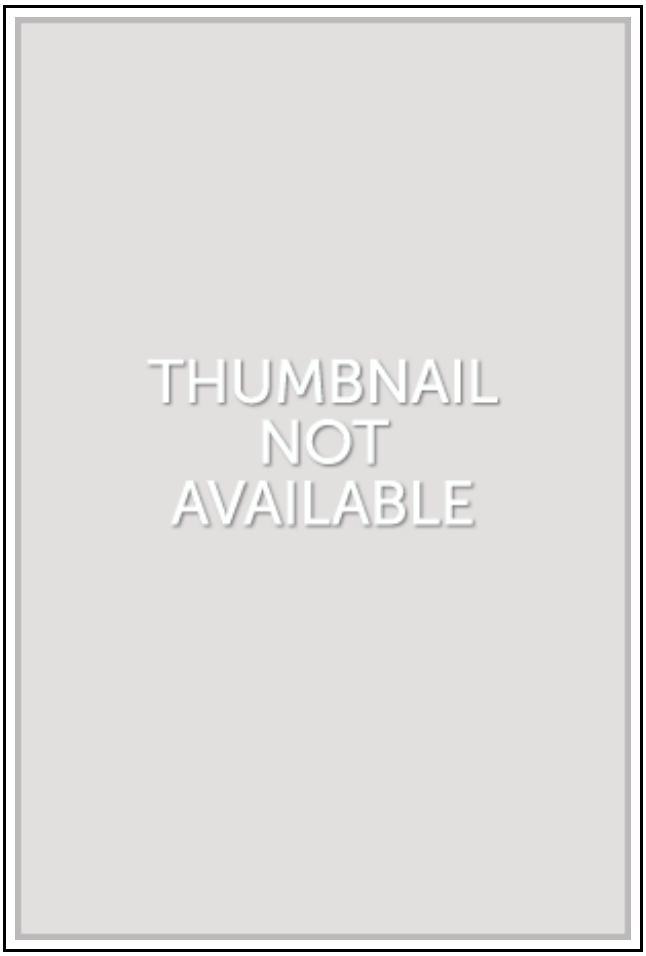
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CUT-OUTS, CASTE AND CINE-STARS: THE WORLD OF TAMIL POLITICS

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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 state, from the free-meal scheme for students and the elevation of leaders to a divine status to the anti-conversion law and the rising importance of the Dravidian parties in national politics. Well-known writer and journalist Vaasanthi has observed the dramatis personae in this epic drama at close quarters for a decade, and Cut-outs, Caste and Cine Stars offers an objective and insightful view of a political world that is both fascinating and perplexing. Printed Pages: 296. Size: 13 Cms x 20 Cms.

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