

TNT - Tamil New Tigers
EROS - Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students
EPRLF - Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front
TELO - Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization
PLOTE - People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam
TEA - Tamil Eelam Army
TENA - Tamil Eelam National Army
ENLF - Eelam National Liberation Front

Tamil New Tigers (TNT)

The TNT was started by V. Pirabhakaran on 22nd May, 1972, soon after the promulgation of the Republican Constitution it became the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam on May 5th, 1976. Velupillai Prabhakaran was born on 26.11.1954, to T.Velupillai, a Malaysian of Tamil origin, who was a district land officer in Jaffna. V. Pirabhakaran was deeply traumatised by seeing one of his uncles burnt alive during the language riots of 1958. Pirabhakaran gradually emerged as a militant leader with a cult of personality in the militant movement. The bitter internal rivalries that were to mark the Tamil struggle in later years were absent then and Pirabhakaran, along with others attended training camps organised by EROS functionaries. In 1972, V. Prabhakaran sailed to India with others including Thangadurai and Kuttimani. He returned to Sri Lanka in 1974.

The first major strike of the TNT was the assassination of the Mayor of Jaffna. On July 27, 1975 Alfred Duriappah, the Tamil Mayor of Jaffna and chief organiser of the SLFP in the region, went to the Varadaraja Perumal temple at Ponnalai in Jaffna. Four young men waiting for him at the temple attacked him as soon as he got out of his car. One of them opened fire from point blank range. The mayor tried to escape but collapsed in a pool of blood. The assailants jumped into Duriappah's car and sped away.

On 05.03.1976 V. Pirabhakaran led a raid on the State run People's Bank, Puttur and escaped with half a million rupees in cash and jewelry worth Rs.2 lakhs after holding the employees at gun point. Soon after this, V. Pirabhakaran founded the LTTE on 5th May, 1976.

Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students or Eelam Revolutionary Organisers (EROS)

Is perhaps the only militant group today which works in collaboration with the LTTE. This group was formed in London in 1975 by Eliyathamby Ratnasabapathy, a Sri Lankan Tamil who was residing in Britain. The EROS became known only when its student wing-the General Union of Eelam Students (GUES) was subsequently formed in Madras. The EROS drew its cadres mainly from Batticaloa and Amparai districts in Eastern Sri Lanka. It was the first Tamil group which attempted to establish a close working relationship with the Muslims of Eastern Sri Lanka, who constitute the second largest ethnic group in the eastern province next to Tamils. In late 1975, they planned a four point agenda to win over the Muslims of the eastern province. The agenda, inter-alia, envisaged that the EROS would work with Muslims to settle problems of the other

groups with Muslims and to have plans for military action when the necessity arises;

In 1976, EROS embarked upon a programme of training by opening a militant training camp in Vavuniya, Northern Sri Lanka. Subsequently, EROS and LTTE reached an agreement and used this camp as their main base for military training. V. Prabhakaran, received his initial training at this camp. Meanwhile, the EROS leadership in London struck a relationship with Syed Hameed, the PLO Representative in U.K, who later arranged training for EROS cadres, as well as LTTE cadres, in Lebanon. In May 1976, after a visit to Beirut by an EROS representative, contact was established with the PLO leader Abu Jihad, (who was subsequently killed by the Israelis). A message was sent to Vavuniya to dispatch cadres for advanced training to Lebanon. EROS and LTTE trained together with the Palestinians in late 1976 and 1977. Around this time, signs of dissent had developed between Uma Maheswaran, the Chairman of the LTTE who was close to the TULF leadership, and V. Prabhakaran, who was an important member of the group. EROS wanted to defuse the tension and sent Uma Maheswaran for training to Lebanon in 1977. In 1980, EROS and its student wing GUES split and the EPRLF was formed.

EROS:- Eelam Revolutionary Organisers (EROS) were reported to be conducting two camps in the districts of Ramnad and Pasumpon Muthuramalingam districts. There were 8 male trainees in these camps which were imparting Physical Training and Arms Training.

Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF)

EPRLF was a break-away faction of EROS. In 1979/1980, differences over the absence of the leadership in London and organisational problems such as democratic centralism arose among the EROS leaders in Sri Lanka. The EPRLF started as a leftist group with a strong Marxist element. In 1982, they formed a military wing and later indulged in several militant activities. The policies and activities of EPRLF were strongly influenced by its leader, K. Padmanabha, who had been trained in 1976 in Lebanon by the PLO and had a political as well as a military mind. Other important leaders of the EPRLF who emerged during its inception were Varadarajah Perumal (who later became the Chief Minister of North-Eastern Provinces) and Ketheeswaran.

KIDNAPPING OF THE ALLENS

An American couple, the Allens, was kidnapped about the same time as George Bush, a former CIA director and the then Vice President of the United States, was visiting New Delhi. Stanley and Mary Allen, working on a development project in Jaffna, were abducted on May 10, 1984 by militants belonging to the EPRLF. They were branded as CIA agents by the EPRLF. In order to release the Allens the EPRLF demanded Rs. 50 million in gold, to be paid to the Tamil Nadu Government, and the release of 20 EPRLF cadres. The actual plan of the EPRLF, which has been kept a secret by their leadership to date, was to seek the release of only one of their Central Committee members who was mentioned in that list of 20 cadres. The EPRLF leaders did not wish to let Colombo know who their key man was, hence the demand was made for the release of 20, almost all held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

After Colombo's attempts to secure the release of the Allens, New Delhi repeatedly appealed to the EPRLF leadership, also without any success. Even though Sri Lankan intelligence reported that 'The Tamil Nadu Police arrested the EPRLF leadership and the Allens were released five days after,' what really happened has been kept a secret. This is what really happened: IB and RAW had threatened Padmanabha, who was then in Madras, that if the Allens were not released, he would be deported. Under such intimidation, Padmanabha

agreed to release the Allens. Later, perhaps under pressure from US, Indira Gandhi wrote a personal letter to Padmanabha urging him to release Allens as this would pose a problem to India and assured India's continued support for their struggle. The Allens were promptly released."

The first hand account of what transpired at Madras which ultimately led to the release of the Allens in Jaffna has been provided by Shri K. Mohandas, former Director General of Police (Intelligence) of Tamil Nadu in his deposition before the Commission on 2nd. January, 1996. His account is as follows :-

"One night I was sleeping in my house. I got a call from the US Consul General from Madras at 11 PM. He told me frantically that Mr. and Mrs. Allen, who are working as water resources experts in Jaffna had been kidnapped by militants. He wanted my assistance to rescue them. I told him how could I help him for the incident that had happened in Jaffna. He pressed that the President of the United States of America was interested. The Consul General said that a large amount of gold and six or so militants in Sri Lankan custody must be released. This must be done within 48 hours or else Mr. and Mrs. Allens would be shot dead. Then something struck me and I asked the Consul General to find out the names of the militants whom they were asking for release. Then as soon as I placed the phone down, I got a call from G. Parthasarthy from Delhi repeating the same request. I rang up MGR and took his permission to take up this matter. I immediately proceeded to office calling all my principal officers to come to the office. As soon as I reached the office, I got a call from the US Consul General revealing the names of the militants whose release the kidnapers had wanted. My officers immediately said that they were from the EPRLF. So the hunt began to find out whether there are any important EPRLF fellows in Madras. After about 24 hours, we got 3 or 4 of them sleeping in a house. There were also two women who were released. The catch was very important. Among the people we caught were one Mr. Padmanabha who was later massacred by LTTE. Then, two, Varadharaja Perumal, the subsequent Chief Minister installed by the IPKF in East Sri Lanka, and three, General Douglas, self styled, who was the chief of militant wing of the EPRLF. I asked my officers to take the three to a five star hotel. It was at about 2.00 A.M. with a lot of security, the officers started questioning. But upto 6.00 A.M. they did not budge. So I went there with two commandos with loaded revolver. I made the three fellows stand. I placed my revolver on the table and made the commandos aim with their AK-47 at them. There was silence for two minutes. I looked at them straight and said: 'It is your people who have made ransom demand on Mr. Allens. I will not allow you to open your mouth. Whatever happens to Allens will happen to you three right in this room.' After five minutes, General Douglas said that he would speak to his people in Jaffna to release Allens. I said 'Mind you, nothing in return; no gold; no release of their comrades.' General Douglas contacted Jaffna and got the release of Mr. and Mrs. Allens and, within four hours, Mr. and Mrs. Allens were released at the residence of Bishop of Jaffna with their eyes blindfolded. There were kidnappings and counter kidnappings within the Sri Lankan militant groups in Tamil Nadu."

EPRLF reached its peak during November 1988 and by the end of the year, on December 9th when Vardharaja Perumal was elected and installed as the Chief Minister of North Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka.

In January 1990, in Sri Lanka, after the Government formed by the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) headed by Varadharaja Perumal as the Chief Minister of the North Eastern Provinces had begun functioning, the phased de-induction of the IPKF had begun and, during this period, the internecine warfare had flared up again. The EPRLF leadership fled Sri Lanka, as the LTTE began large scale offensive against the EPRLF, and sought refuge in India. The EPRLF cadres, on the advice of the State Government of Tamil Nadu were not allowed to enter Tamil Nadu and were rehabilitated in Orissa instead; however, they could not abandon Tamil Nadu and kept visiting Madras frequently.

On 19th June 1990, a hit squad of the LTTE assassinated the Secretary General K. Padmanabha of EPRLF and 14 others in Madras at about 6 PM. Padmanabha and his associates were gunned down in an apartment in the centrally located colony of Kodambakkam, Madras. The assassins drove away after the crime and

escaped to Sri Lanka two days later after traversing a distance of more than 300 Kms. from Madras to Vedaranyam. Neither were they intercepted on the way nor was any effective action taken.

However, after the de-induction of the IPKF, this organisation was set upon by the LTTE. K. Padmanabha, the General Secretary along with several other important EPRLF functionaries were assassinated on 19th June 1990 at Madras.

Training given to the EPRLF by the Research and Analysis Wing of the Indian Government occurred at the following locations: The Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) was reported to be conducting 7 training camps in the districts of Thanjavur West (3 camps), South Arcot (2 camps), Trichy (1 camp) and Ramnad (1 camp) with a total strength of 73 male trainees who were being trained in Guerilla warfare, Physical Training and Arms training. These camps reportedly possessed sophisticated weapons such as Light Machine -guns as well as transport vehicles.

Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO)

This organisation was formally founded in 1979 though it was in existence since 1968 as an unstructured organisation. TELO has its origins in the Thangadorai group under the leadership of Thangadorai and Kuttimani. In one of their major acts, on March. 25, 1981, the TELO committed robbery by ambushing a "Peoples Bank" van which was returning to Jaffna town with the day's collection. An amount of Rs. 78 lakh rupees was taken and several policemen killed in this hit was masterminded by Kuttimani.

Prime Minister's advisors were working overtime, giving facilities to the militants, particularly the TELO (Tamil Ealam Liberation Organisation) to be trained in the use of modern arms in the camps organised in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, New Delhi and elsewhere. The idea was that after the training, they would be supplied with arms and sent to Northern Sri Lanka to engage the Sri Lankan troops in guerrilla action. It was supposed to be a top secret operation without even the knowledge of the State Government and its Intelligence agency.

On April 5, 1981, Kuttimani, Thangadurai and Sellathurai Sivasubramaniam alias Thevan were arrested at Mannalkadal, near Point Pedro, while trying to escape in a boat to India. After the arrest of Thangadorai and Kuttimani, Sri Sabaratnam took over the TELO leadership. The three important TELO leaders Thangadurai, Kuttimani and Jegan were killed in a prison massacre in Wellawatte in 1983 while they were incarcerated there. After the death of these leaders, TELO could never regroup and in the ensuing internecine skirmishes, the LTTE virtually liquidated this organisation by the middle of eighties.

On 27.07.83 there was a massacre allegedly by Sri Lankan security forces in the prison at Wellikade where 54 Tamil Youths alongwith Tamil militant leaders Kuttimani and Thangadurai of TELO were done to death allegedly by the Sri Lankan Army. After their deaths Sabaratnam took over leadership of TELO. But there were major internal conflicts between him and members of the organisation.

On 27.2.84, BOBBY and three other TELO members were found in possession of 11.774 Kgs of gold suspected to have been looted from the Peoples Bank at Jaffna. They were caught in India.

On 09.06.1984, Rajan and few others of TELO resorted to an indefinite fast near Gandhi statue in Madras, protesting against the opprobrious attitude of their leader Sri Sabaratnam.

TELO leaders confined three dissident cadres of their organisation, two of whom later escaped and sought shelter in the room of one Dhayaparan, a Sri Lankan Tamil student in the Madras Medical College hostel.

Sri Sabaratnam, TELO leader, sent his boys to intimidate dissidents at Mahalingapuram and Arcot Road in Madras. Sudha, the political head of the breakaway group, organised "Martyrs' Day", independent of TELO. A few boys of Sri Sabaratnam joined Sudha, and TELO planned to settle scores with them in Jaffna.

On 5.5.86 the TELO leader Sabartnam was killed by the LTTE, in Sri Lanka.

Military training given to TELO by the RAW in India: Five camps organised by Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) were reported to be running in the districts of Ramnad (3 camps) and Salem (2 camps). There were totally 233 male cadres undergoing this training which comprised Physical Training, Arms training, swimming and boat driving.

People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE)

PLOTE was founded in 1980 by Karthiragamar Uma Maheswaran alias Mukundan who became its General Secretary. He was the Chairman of the LTTE from 1977-1980. He was trained in Lebanon and later in Syria. After a bitter rivalry with Velupillai Prabhakaran, Uma Maheswaran left the LTTE in 1980, and formed PLOTE.

PLOTE was active in cultivating international connections: it established links with Dr.George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Communist party of Tunisia, the Communist-Leninist Party of Algeria, the Turkish Organisation for Solidarity with Palestine, the African National Congress, the FMLN of EI Salvador, the Sandinistas of Nicaragua and the ruling parties of Mauritius and Cuba.

LTTE vs PLOTE

On 19th May, 1982 there was shoot out at about 2145 hrs. at Pondy Bazaar, Mambalam, Madras in which leaders of two prominent Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups opened fire at each other due to internal rivalry. The two members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leader V. Prabhakaran, and Raghavan alias Sivakumar armed with revolvers opened fire on Jotheeswaran and Mukundan alias Uma Maheswaran, members of Peoples' Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE). In mid seventies both Prabhakaran and Uma Maheswaran were members of the LTTE. During the exchange of fire, Jotheeswaran sustained bullet injuries both in his right and left thighs. Mukundan was also shot at but escaped unhurt. The accused V.Pirabhakaran and Sivakumar were arrested and remanded. Both of them were proclaimed offenders of the Sri Lankan Government with a reward on their head of Rs. 5 lakhs each.

On 25th May, 1982 Uma Maheswaran was arrested near Gummidipoondi-railway station. At the time of arrest, he opened fire with his revolver and therefore another case was registered against him under the Indian Arms Act.

In the meantime, on 23rd May, 1982 Sivaneswaran alias Niranjana, an accomplice of Mukundan was also arrested at Saidapet, Madras and an unlicensed revolver seized from him. All these accused remained in

Judicial custody till 5th August, 1982 when they were released by the orders of the court on conditional bail. The LTTE cadres including their leader V.Pirabhakaran had taken up residence at Mylapore Madras, while the leaders and members of the PLOTE had been staying at Saidapet, Madras.

PLOTE lost its strength and momentum gradually due to the increasing criminalisation of its cadres and despotic methods of Uma Maheswaran. In July 1989, Uma Maheswaran was shot dead in Colombo suspectedly due to intra-organisational differences.

PLOT:- The Peoples Liberation Organisation for Tamil Eelam (PLOT) was conducting training in 18 camps located in the districts of Thanjavur West (11 camps), Pudukottai (4 camps), Tirunelveli East (2 camps) and Thanjavur East (1 camp). Totally 2236 cadres in addition to 94 female cadres were getting trained in these camps. The camps possessed transport facilities, boats and some weapons. Predominantly, the training comprised guerrilla warfare and also Physical Training, Swimming and Boat Driving.

Tamil Eelam Army (TEA)

On 23.12.1985, a jeep belonging to TEA accidentally hit girl students of Kasturba Gandhi Kanya Gurukulam at Vedaranyam while they were proceeding from their school towards a temple. The students sustained simple injuries. A case was registered. The driver was arrested. People were agitated. TEA, EPRLF and PLOTE representatives attended a condolence meeting and expressed grief. But the public were sore that the top leader of the TEA did not attend the meeting. A condemnatory procession was taken out and when the processioners attacked a settlement of TEA cadres, the cadres opened fire in the air to scare away the processionists.

MEENAMBAKKAM AIRPORT BOMB BLAST

There was a bomb blast at the Madras International Airport on the 3rd. August 1984 in which over 30 persons were killed and several others were injured. There was an estimated damage to the Airport of over Rs. 50 lakhs. Initially thought to be the planted by the Mossad, the Israeli Intelligence agency, with a view to discrediting the Tamil militants at the behest of Sri Lankan Government.

But the Crime Branch/CID investigation revealed the involvement of a small group called TEA (Tamil Eelam Army). Involved were: (1) the TEA Chief "Panegoda" Maheswaran (so called because of his daring escape from the maximum security prison at Panegoda in Sri Lanka) who was a chemical engineering graduate from London University and an expert in explosives. (2) Vigneswara Raja, retired Collector of Customs in Sri Lanka; (3) Thambi Raja, a Sri Lankan national; (4) Vijayakumar, and (5) Loganathan, both Indian nationals working for Air Lanka; and (6) Chandrakumar, a police constable attached to the Airport police station.

The objective of the TEA was not to blast Madras airport, but to plant a bomb on the Air Lanka plane leaving Madras for Colombo, with the timing so adjusted as to have the bomb explode in Colombo airport. The plan misfired because of the delay in the take off of the Air Lanka aircraft. Vigneswara Raja, Thambi Raja, Vijayakumar, Loganathan and Chandrakumar were arrested immediately, while Maheswaran absconded.

During the course of the investigation from a suburban house in Madras a similar timing device was seized apart from 100 kg of gelatine sticks, detonator wires, chemicals like red phosphorous and sodium metal, crystal capacitors, 1 kg of potassium cyanide and currency worth Rs. 200,000 (both Indian and Foreign). It was apparent that the time-bomb used at the airport was manufactured in this house, and this was

corroborated by the arrested Sri Lankan nationals.

The members of the TEA who were Kadiresan, Thambiraja, Sri, Ramu and Dhandapani planned during the period February to July, 1984 to cause bomb blast at Colombo to cause harm to the Sri Lankan Army as a retaliatory act to the atrocities caused by the Sri Lankan Army to the Tamil civilians of Northern Sri Lanka. During the course of the mission, the TEA purchased explosives in the form of gelatine from Palayamkottai.

The gelatine was purchased from National Trading company on three occasions during March to July, 1984. The TEA had also purchased detonators from the same shop. The shop was a licensed explosive shop which sold explosives to quarry contractors. The TEA then stored the explosives in a house at Anna Nagar, Madras.

The original plan was to have Kadiresan board the Air Lanka Flight from Madras to Colombo on 31.7.84 alongwith two suit cases filled with explosives equiped with a timing device. However, on 31.7.84 at about pm when Kadiresan got the suitcases weighed at the checking counter, the weight was found to be in excess by 35 Kgs. Since he did not have money to pay the extra charges, he cancelled his plane ticket and came back with the two suitcases. On 2.8.84 at about 6 p.m., Kadiresan again went to the Meenambakkam airport, this time to board the Air Lanka flight UL 122 to Colombo. Kadiresan got the baggage checked in and paid excess baggage fare. Each of the two boxes filled with explosives weighed 55 kgs. To misguide the investigators, Kadiresan got his name changed in the passenger manifest from Kadiresan to Jadiesan. The two boxes were sent to the Customs hall for checking. Since a Kadiresan did not come forward to get the suitcases checked, the flight left without the accused as well as the boxes. The accused went away from the airport leaving the suitcases abandoned in the Customs hall. Realizing that the time bomb will explode at the airport, the accused made anonymous call at about 2210 hrs. to the Security manager that the bombs were kept in the two boxes. Another call was given by the accused at 2245 hrs. However, while the two boxes were in the process of being removed, they exploded at 2250 hrs.

After the crackdown on it in the wake of the blast at the Meenambakkam Airport, the TEA has thinned down and finally faded away in India.

Tamil Eelam National Army (TENA)

The Tamil Eelam National Army (TENA) was organised by Bagirathan Ravi in Ettara, near Tiruchirappalli and later moved them to Karur. Bagirathan Ravi was the son of Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) leader, Amirthalingam. The TULF were a non-violent political organisation. Like other militant organizations the TENA recieved training from the Indian RAW. During their training in India they had 1 camp, and 25 trainees.

During March 1985 TELA split into two factions, one led by Rajan and the other by Kanthan. Towards the end of March 1985, one Lion of TELA(Rajan) group fired a round from a revolver in a confrontation with Susilan and two others who had left TELA to throw in their lot with PLOT.

On 28.03.1985, seven members of TELA went to Pattukottai from Madurai and one of them fired a shot with his revolver to scare three cadres of TELA who had earlier defected to PLOTE and who were then collecting funds in Pattukottai bus stand.

A daring incident of abduction and blackmail was reported from Madurai on 9.11.85 involving one Naresh, son of a Government coroner in Sri Lanka. This youth was abducted by some members of the TELA (Rajan) group and kept captive near Sirumalai. Not content with taking away 25 sovereigns of gold jewellery in his possession, his abductors also sent ransom notes demanding one lakh rupees for his release. Police swooped on their camp and secured his release and also arrested 17 persons.

Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF)

During November 1985 four militant groups namely Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO), Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam(LTTE), Eelam People Revolutionary Liberation Front(EPRLF) & Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Tamil (ERO) joined together to form a front called Eelam National Liberation Front (ENLF). This union was short lived