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## THE ATOMIC BOMB-HIROSHIMA



## Over view:

Between 1941 and 1945, scientists at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, led by Robert Oppenheimer, worked on the Manhattan Project to make an atomic bomb. On 16 July 1945, the atomic bomb was successfully tested at Alamogordo, in New Mexico.

The decision whether to drop it - almost as difficult as making the bomb - was taken by US President Harry S Truman. Truman dropped the atomic bomb to bring the war against Japan to a quick end. He said it was dropped to save American soldiers' lives. Historians suspect Truman did not want to give the **Soviets** a chance to get involved in the Far East.

On 6 August 1945 the first atomic bomb, codenamed 'Little Boy', was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. Three days later, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.

On 14 August 1945, the Japanese surrendered.

The creation and use of the atomic bomb was truly a turning point in warfare. The atomic bomb changed international relations. The superpowers of the USA and the USSR did not dare to start a war where both sides had nuclear weapons.

### The decision to use the atomic bomb

Between 1942 and 1945, the Americans had been involved in a strategic bombing campaign in Japan. Precision bombing was not very successful. In the last seven months of the campaign, they switched to 'fire bombing'. 67 Japanese cities were destroyed, up to 500,000 people were killed and 5 million were left homeless.

In July 1945, the war in the Pacific was still going slowly. Fighting between the Japanese and Allies was fierce. Japan prepared to fight an invasion with a build up of millions of troops and the Americans feared that invading Japan would cost millions of American soldiers' lives.

The American President Truman did not want the **Soviet Union** to get involved in the Far East. They had used the war to gain control of eastern Europe, and Truman did not want the same thing to happen in the Far East.

## Decision timeline

21 July	Truman received the report which confirmed that the Alamogordo test had been successful, and America had an <b>atomic bomb</b> . Truman insisted that the Japanese should be given the opportunity to surrender before the bomb was used.
26 July	The British, Chinese and Americans called on Japan to surrender unconditionally. This is known as the Potsdam Declaration.  The <b>Soviet Union</b> did not agree - the Japanese had asked them to try to negotiate a peace treaty.
28 July	The Japanese refused to surrender unconditionally.
3 August	The Japanese again asked for a negotiated peace.

## Dropping the atomic bomb

6 August	The American B29 bomber Enola Gay dropped the first <b>atomic bomb</b> , codenamed 'Little Boy', on the Japanese city of Hiroshima:  it exploded with the force of 20,000 tons of TNT the temperature at the centre of the explosion reached 3000°C - 4000°C - three times hotter than volcanic lava everything within a mile of the centre of the blast was flattened fires spread and around 67 per cent of Hiroshima's buildings were destroyed
9 August	The Americans dropped a second atomic bomb, codenamed 'Fat Man', on the Japanese city of Nagasaki.
14 August	The Japanese surrendered.

## Consequences

The Americans estimate the number killed as 117,000. The Japanese put it at quarter of a million. Many more suffered horrific injuries. In the years that followed, many of the survivors, known as 'hibakusha', developed ill health.

Studies of the hibakusha have allowed doctors to understand radiation poisoning, and to set safety levels for the nuclear power industry.

By the 1950s, America and the Soviet Union had developed the more powerful hydrogen bomb, and had learned how to put them on inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). The world entered an era of 'overkill' - where it had the ability to destroy every living thing on earth many times over.

Between the 1960s and the 1990s, people lived under the shadow of the fear of nuclear war:

Every year from 1958 to 1963 the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) marched to London from the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston in Berkshire to demand the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Today politicians worry what would happen if a terrorist group got hold of an atomic weapon.

The **atomic bomb** changed international relations. The superpowers, that is the USA and the Soviet Union, did not dare to start a war because both sides had nuclear weapons. There was a period of 'Cold War' where two sides opposed each other without actually going to war.

### The Dropping of the Atomic Bombs on Japan Was Justifiable.

#### **Why the bombs were needed or justified: -**

- In 1945 the war between the US and Japan in the Pacific had been raging for almost 5 years
- The Japanese had demonstrated fanatical resistance, fighting to the last man on the Pacific islands and unleashing kamikaze attacks at Okinawa.
- Calls for Japan to surrender were ignored by their military leadership
- Had the atomic bombs not been used, a full-scale invasion of Japan would have been necessary; resulting in hundreds of thousands more lives being lost.

#### **The cost in lives of an invasion: -**

- In August 1945, hundreds of thousands of GIs, who had managed to survive the war in Europe, were getting ready to leave for the Pacific.

There they would meet up with a million more young US recruits, to start fighting the Japanese. At least 50-80% of these soldiers were expected to die in the invasion of the Japanese home islands, which everyone believed would be a bloodbath.

- The two battles held immediately before it was decided to drop the atomic bombs were Iwo Jima and Okinawa. In these battles the Japanese fought to the death and the cost in American casualties was horrific.
- It was predicted that the invasion of the Japanese mainland at the Island of Kyushu -- scheduled for November of 1945 -- would be even worse.
- The Americans believed that the entire Japanese military and civilian population would fight to the death.
- American casualties -- just for that initial invasion to get a foothold on the island of Japan would have taken up to an estimated two months and would have resulted in up to 75,000 to 100,000 casualties with up to 20,000 dead. And that was just the beginning.
- Once the island of Kyushu was captured by U.S. troops, the remainder of Japan would follow, with enormous casualty figures.
- It is difficult to estimate the cost in injuries and lives of a full-scale land invasion, however military historians have suggested that there would have been a minimum of 250,000 US casualties and possibly as many as 1 million Japanese civilian casualties.
- It is not beyond the possibility that up to or more than 500,000 Americans could have been killed had they landed because the Japanese were ready and waiting for the land invasion.
- A major problem was that many of the roads around the landing areas were too small for the US tanks and without the tanks playing a major role, casualties would have been severe.

#### **The Japanese were not willing to consider surrender:-**

- The Japanese system of honour taught that death was preferable to surrender.
- This meant that the Japanese people believed surrender was a disgrace so terrible that they could never give in.
- Conventional firebombing had killed 100,000 in Tokyo but this had had no effect on the Japanese military government.
- The Japanese military government was fanatical and needed a strong message to force them into surrendering.
- There were still hundreds of thousands of the Japanese military in Japan and women were being trained to fight. Propaganda stories of what the Americans would do to them if they surrendered meant that most were determined to fight to the death, rather than surrender.

- Japanese men, women and children were willing to die for the emperor.

### **Dropping the bombs saved lives**

- Hiroshima and Nagasaki would have been firebombed anyway, before any land invasion had taken place.
- More Japanese people would have died from a prolonged campaign of conventional firebombing.
- The use of the bombs ended the war with Japan more quickly and, consequently, saved more lives.
- The largest number of people killed in a single raid was not at Hiroshima, but at Tokyo, with conventional firebombs. Some 80,000-100,000 people killed. This type of bombing would have continued until the end of the war.
- The atomic bomb gave Emperor Hirohito the argument he needed to persuade the military that the time had come for Japan to surrender. It was one thing to surrender in the face of battle against an enemy with conventional bombs and weapons. It was another thing to face the force of the new atomic weapons.
- In fact the atomic bombs actually killed fewer Japanese per city and than conventional firebombs.
- The dropping of the bombs took many fewer Japanese lives than if the USA had tried to invade Japan, because the Japanese casualties were expected to be 5 to 10 times that of the Allies in an invasion.
- While the atomic bombs, just as like any bombs, were a terrible way to die, in the long run it saved lives and brought WW 2 to an end.
- How many Japanese would have died as America invaded the islands of Japan?
- Every city could have been levelled.
- In this destruction, what the bullets and bombs didn't kill the diseases that followed would finish. Certainly the figure would have far exceeded those that died from the two bombs that were dropped.
- After having fought through Iwo Jima, Saipan, Guam, and Okinawa, there was no doubt that the Japanese people and their leaders would fight until the last man, woman, and child.
- If the Emperor had not instructed his subjects to stop fighting after Nagasaki they were prepared to resist tanks and artillery with sticks and stones until the last man, woman, and child perished.

### **All nations in WWII killed civilians**

- All the countries involved in the war killed civilians.
- The British night time bombing of the German cities killed at least 300,000 civilians and injured up to 800,000 more. The German cities were devastated. Incendiary bombs created fire storms, where the flames 'ate' up all the oxygen and sucked in oxygen from the surrounding areas at such speeds that hurricanes were made which pulled everyone into them.
- Hamburg was one of the cities that suffered a firestorm-  
**"... Children were torn away from their parents' hands by the force of the hurricane and whirled into the fire." Written by Hamburg's police chief in 1943.**
- There was little distinction between civilians and soldiers in WWII because of the industrial nature of the war. The military needed the civilians to make the weapons, tanks and bombs they needed and the other side needed to destroy that industrial capacity.
- So cities with industrial capacity were targets for each side to bomb and civilian casualties were seen as unavoidable
- There was also a deliberate tactic of bombing civilians to foster terror. The British hoped the bombing of the German cities would make the German people turn against Hitler.

### **The Japanese were not innocent**

- Just four years earlier the Japanese invaded us at Pearl Harbor without warning, bringing the US into World War II. We at least gave Japan a warning and they still wouldn't surrender.
- The Japanese committed many atrocities in World War Two, against the Chinese, the Koreans, in Singapore and against their British prisoners in camps, where they were starved and beaten.

### **All war is unjust but the dropping of the Atomic bombs was not a war crime.**

- The USA had a right to drop the bomb, under international law of the time because the Japanese had started the war with America when it attacked the US fleet at Pearl Harbor, without warning.
- The USA committed no crime of any national or international kind when dropping the Atomic bombs. America was at war with Japan and the objective of war is to defeat your enemy and keep your own men alive.

## **Japan wanted to bomb the US**

- The Japanese also had a secret atomic bomb project. There can be no doubt that the Japanese would have used it against America if they perfected the bomb in time.

## **It was the Atomic bombings that ended the war**

- Japan was not about to surrender. Even after the bombs, when the Emperor Hirohito was surrendering, a group of diehard military officials tried to steal his tape of surrender. The coup failed but it shows that some of the Japanese military would never have given in.
- The U.S. asked Japan to surrender before the dropping of the first bomb, but there was no response.
- After the first bomb the Japanese were asked again to surrender and yet again there was no response and so the second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki.
- Even after the second bomb was detonated, the Japanese still did not surrender for another week. The US kept up round the clock conventional bombing of the other Japanese cities until the moment of surrender.

## **Other arguments**

- Some people argue that the Americans should have dropped a bomb on a remote area, without a civilian population, to show them what could happen to them. However, with only two bombs ready it was too risky to "waste" one in a demonstration.
- Immediate use of the bomb convinced the world of its horror and prevented future use when nuclear stockpiles were far larger.
- The bomb's use impressed the Soviet Union and halted the war quickly enough so that the USSR did not demand joint occupation of Japan.
- The atomic bombs ended a conflict which the Japanese were largely responsible for starting.



## The Dropping of the Atomic Bombs on Japan Cannot Be Justified

### **Japan was on the verge of surrender.**

- More than 60 of its cities had been destroyed by conventional bombing
- Its islands were being blockaded by the American Navy
- The Soviet Union had entered the war by attacking Japanese troops in Manchuria
- By 1945 it was only a matter of time before Japan lost the war and so arguments suggesting that only the atomic bombs could have ended the war are false.

### **The USA could have tried harder to get a Japanese surrender.**

- The Americans were demanding "unconditional surrender" and would not agree to the Japanese keeping their Emperor
- The Japanese people believed that their Emperor was a God-like figure and would never agree to him losing his position as leader.
- This needlessly prolonged Japan's resistance.

### **There was no need to drop the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki**

- In using the bomb, the United States could have chosen an uninhabited or military target. Such a show of force was also likely to have convinced Japan's leaders to quit, without killing many people.
- The United States should have made much more effort to warn the Japanese of the potential power of atomic weapons as a method of convincing the Japanese to surrender.
- In fact the power of the bombs was never explained to the Japanese leaders.
- The two cities were of limited military value. Civilians outnumbered troops in Hiroshima five or six to one.

### **Dropping the Atomic Bombs was morally wrong**

- Using the atomic bombs on civilian targets was morally wrong and against the Geneva Convention. This says that bombings should be carried out against military targets.
- Hiroshima and Nagasaki had almost no military value.

- The cities were chosen because they had not been bombed previously and America wanted clean targets to measure the impact of the atomic weapons.
- In effect, some 250,000 people lost their lives so the U.S. could conduct a test, which is an atrocity.

### **Dropping the second bomb can never be justified**

- Even if people can argue that Hiroshima was necessary to force the Japanese to surrender, the U.S.A did not give enough time for word to filter out of its devastation before bombing Nagasaki.
- The truth is that the USA wanted to try out a second bomb.
- Scientists at Los Alamos had built two bombs, the plutonium bomb which was dropped on Hiroshima and a uranium bomb.
- Hiroshima had shown the effectiveness of the plutonium bomb, but another mission was needed to see what damage a uranium bomb could do.
- The people of Nagasaki were therefore killed so that America could test its second bomb. The people of Nagasaki died to show the Americans how powerful their uranium bomb was. This makes the bombing a war crime.

### **The Atomic Bombs were not like conventional weapons.**

- The bombs melted the eyes and skin and left people with injuries much more horrific than the worst casualties from ordinary bombing.
- Several women had the intricate designs from their Kimonos burned into their flesh
- The radiation released from the bombs caused radiation sickness, which killed many thousands of people, who had managed to survive the initial blast, because the radiation was carried on the wind.
- The radiation is one of the main reasons why the bombings can be seen as a war crime.
- Atomic bombing cannot be compared to conventional bombing because of the factor of the radiation poisoning, which leads to cancers such as Leukaemia.
- The radiation released from the bombs is still causing problems in Japan today, where babies are still being born with disabilities as a result of the atomic bombs.

**The Americans chose to sacrifice the lives of Japanese civilians to protect the lives of US soldiers.**

- The main argument for the dropping of the bombs is that invading Japan would cause high US casualties. Dropping the bombs did save US soldier's lives, but civilians are not supposed to protect soldiers with their lives.

**The bombings were more about keeping the Russians out of Japan**

- The real reason America used these weapons was to show Russia that the US possessed them.
- America wanted to prevent the Russians from becoming more involved in the war against Japan.
- America was due to invade in November 1945 and by this time the USSR would have fought long enough to have want involvement in Japan at the end of the war.
- Dropping the bombs brought the war to a speedier end and meant that the USSR could have no say in what happened to Japan.
- Dropping the bombs also gave the Americans an advantage in the Cold War against the USSR, because the bombings showcased the full destructive power that the U.S. had available.
- Japanese lives were sacrificed simply for power politics between the U.S. and the USSR.

**Dropping the bombs cannot be justified**

- The only legal deaths in war are military deaths.
- To plan on the basis that civilians will die to save military deaths is not legal under international law.
- To say that the U.S. was justified in dropping the bombs, one would have to believe that "the end justifies the means" but here the means was the appalling death of civilians,
- Bombs of this magnitude can never be justified, especially against civilians.

**Other arguments**

- The bomb was used partly to justify the \$2 billion spent on its development.
- Conventional firebombing would have caused as much significant damage without making the U.S. the first nation to use nuclear weapons.



A British slave ship set off from Liverpool, Glasgow or Bristol, carrying trade goods and sailed to West Africa.

- Some slaves were captured directly by the British traders. They ambushed and captured local people in Africa.
- Most slave ships got their slaves from British 'factors', who lived full-time in Africa and bought slaves from local tribal chiefs. The chiefs would raid a rival village and sell their captured enemies as slaves.
- In 1700, a slave cost about £3-worth of traded goods, eg cloth, guns, gunpowder and brandy.
- The slaves were marched to the coast in chained lines called coffles, where they were held in prisons called 'factories'.

The slave ship then sailed across the Atlantic to the West Indies - this leg of the voyage was called the 'Middle Passage'.

- In the West Indies the slaves were sold at an auction called a 'scramble'. Some were sent to 'seasoning camps' to be trained to obey, often using brutal methods.
- The selling price of a slave in the West Indies in 1700 was £20, so there was a good profit to be had, which made the risks of long journeys and possible harsh weather worthwhile.

Some ships, but not all, then loaded up with sugar and rum to sell in Britain, before making the voyage back home.

## Abolition

At the end of the 18th century, public opinion began to turn against the slave trade.

There was resistance to the slave trade:

- Some African rulers refused to sell slaves to the traders. Occasionally villages attacked British slave ships and set the slaves free.
- Sometimes slaves mutinied on board ships. The most famous case was the *Amistad* in 1839.
- There were many slave rebellions. The most famous slave leader was Toussaint l'Ouverture, who led a successful slave revolution in French Saint Domingue in 1791.
- In Jamaica, runaway slaves formed 'Maroon' communities that fought against the British soldiers.
- In Britain, slaves like James Somerset (or Somersett), frequently ran away from their masters. When he was recaptured, he and his friends contested his case in the courts.

In 1787, the Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was set up. William Wilberforce represented the committee in Parliament.

- The campaigners boycotted sugar, wrote letters and presented petitions.
- Thomas Clarkson went on a speaking tour, showing people chains and irons and a model of a slave ship.
- Other campaigners published leaflets describing conditions on the Middle Passage and atrocities such as

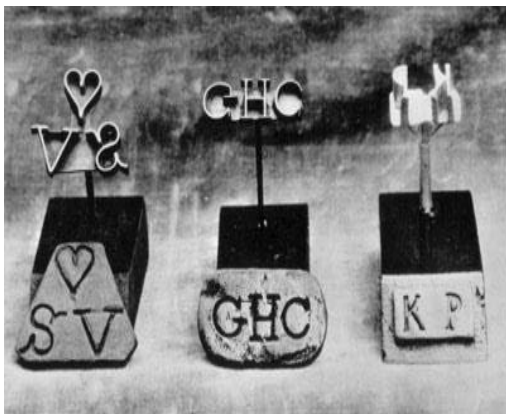
the *Zong* incident (1781). The captain of the slave ship *Zong* threw 133 slaves overboard so he could claim the insurance.

British Africans such as Olaudah Equiano formed the 'Sons of Africa' and campaigned against the slave trade.

There is some evidence that the slave trade was becoming less profitable - the price of **buying** slaves in Africa was rising, reaching £25 in 1800, but the price for **selling** in the Americas had not risen as quickly and was only £35 in 1800.

Life on the plantation:

Slaves were often:



- Branded on face, chest or back
- 3-4 year-olds work in 'trash gangs' (weeding)
- 9-12 year-olds work in fields with adults
- Elderly worked as domestic servants
- No legal rights – forbidden to read, write, marry own property
- Flogging & other punishments

## Punishments:

- Rebellions - rebels nailed to ground, fire applied starting at the feet and moving upwards
- Running away - neck ring or iron muzzle
- Continued running away - removal of hand or foot
- Flogging - one lash for each year of slave's life

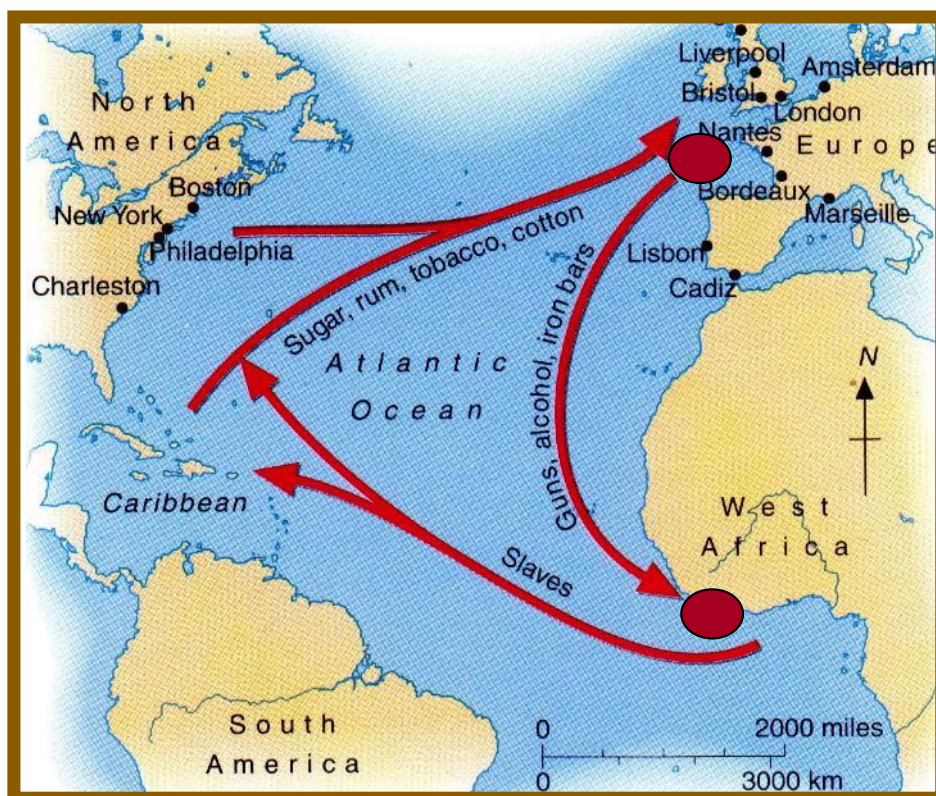


## The working day:

- 5:30 - go straight to field. Work until 8.00am. Latecomers whipped
- 8:00 - Stop work for breakfast: boiled yam & okra seasoned with salt & pepper
- 8:30 - Continue work
- 12:00 pm - Rest & lunch: salted meat or pickled fish
- 2:00pm - Start work again
- 6:00pm - Return to huts
- Night time - During harvest, work in mill or boilings houses through night



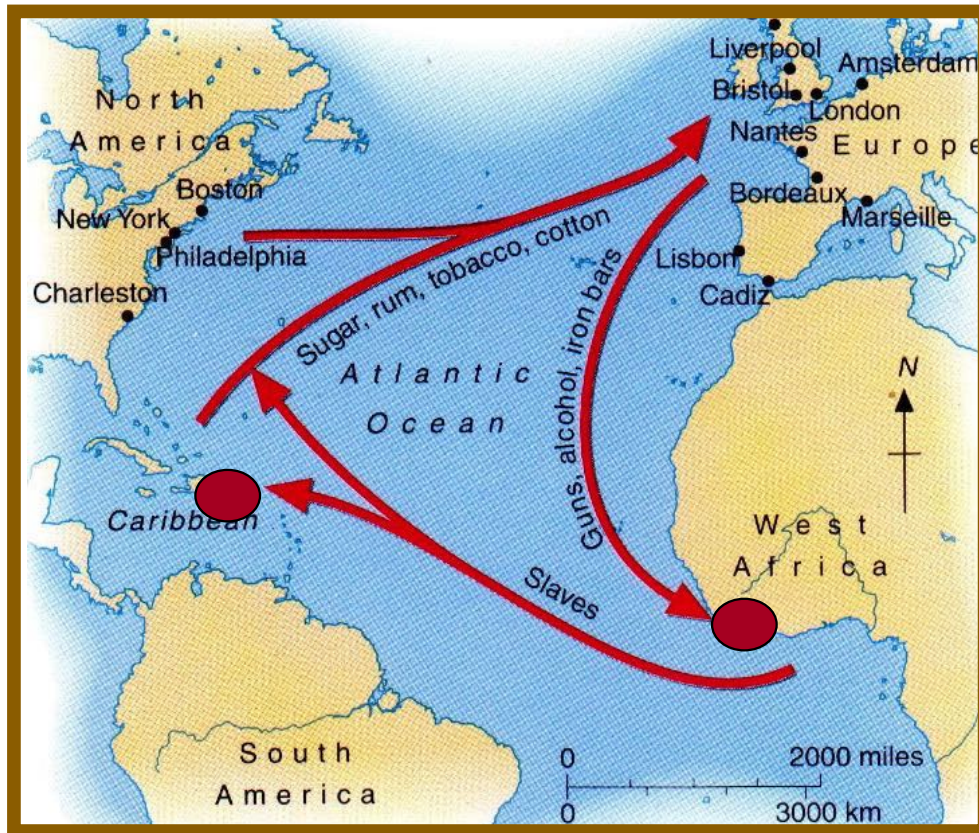
## Triangular Trade



### The First Passage

Slave ships set off from ports like **Liverpool** filled with goods like cloth and guns. On the West coast of Africa slaves were kept in dungeons in European built forts. European ship captains traded with African chiefs and herded their **human cargo** onto the overcrowded ships.

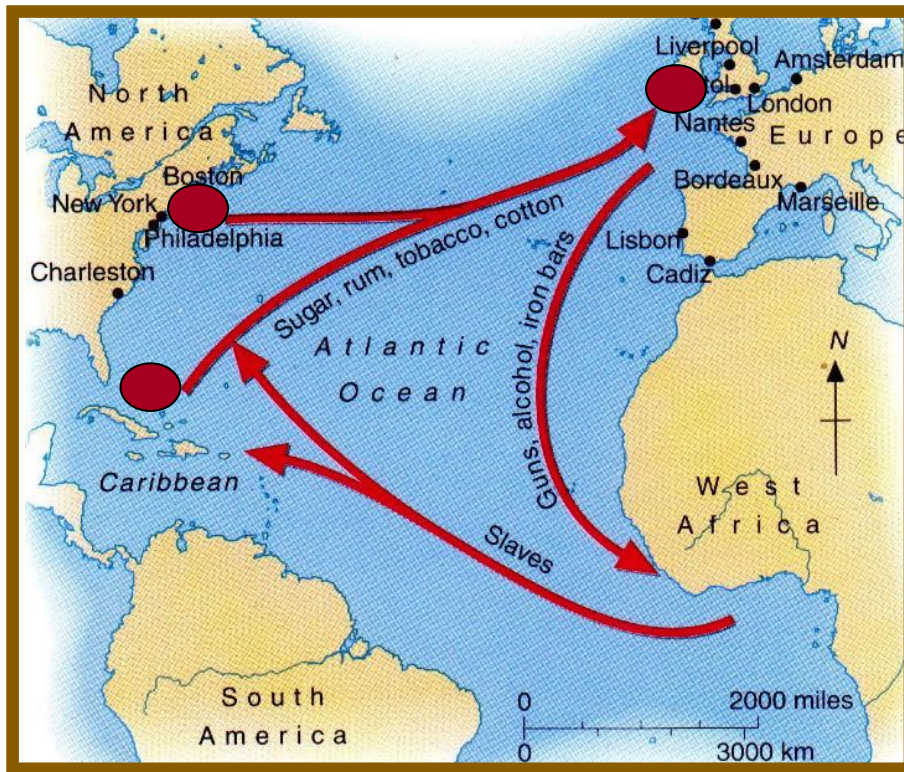
# Triangular Trade



## The Middle Passage

The voyage across the Atlantic from Africa to the West Indies and America was known as the **'Middle Passage'**. It was **2500 miles** and took **40 days**. Thousands of slaves died on this voyage.

## Triangular Trade



### The Third Passage

When arriving in the West Indies / America slaves were sold and the profits were used to buy sugar, rum, tobacco and cotton. These goods were then sold on arriving back in Britain for large **profits** again.