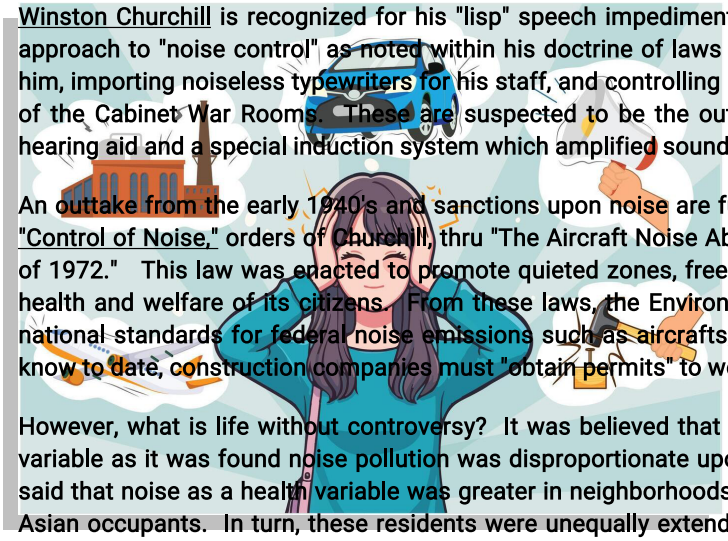
Control of Noise and the Control of Noise Controversy

Against war time NO church bells regulation, the "Control of Noise (Defence)" order was placed by Winston Churchill in 1943 allowing church bells to ring in summonce of the people to Sunday service, Good Friday and Christmas Day only.



Winston Churchill is recognized for his "lisp" speech impediment, yet, he is most remembered historically for his approach to "noise control" as noted within his doctrine of laws banning noises such as whistling, which irritated him, importing noiseless typewriters for his staff, and controlling noise within corridors and alternate passageways of the Cabinet War Rooms. These are suspected to be the outcomes of his hearing loss for which he utilized hearing aid and a special induction system which amplified sound directly into his aid.

An outtake from the early 1940's and sanctions upon noise are further explored in the United States, in lieu of the "Control of Noise," orders of Churchill, thru "The Aircraft Noise Abatement Act of 1968" and the "Noise Control Act of 1972." This law was enacted to promote quieted zones, free from environmental noise which jeopardized the health and welfare of its citizens. From these laws, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was able to set national standards for federal noise emissions such as aircrafts, construction and transportation activity. As we know to date, construction companies must "obtain permits" to work overnight" in public zones.

However, what is life without controversy? It was believed that the "Control of Noise" presented a sort of ethnic variable as it was found noise pollution was disproportionate upon minority and low-income communities. It was said that noise as a health variable was greater in neighborhoods with higher poverty rates of Black, Hispanic, and Asian occupants. In turn, these residents were unequally extended functional solutions to control the noise such as sound proofing which was is an expensive project.

The "Control of Noise Ethnic Controversy" refers to the disproportionate impact of noise pollution on minority and low-income communities and the inequitable solutions that have often excluded these groups. Addressing the historical needs of these overlooked communities was urgent as a solution to the plausible negative health impact it held such as high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and lower birth weight. However, loud noises are most recognized as a cause for tinnitus, permanent damage to the inner ear, hearing loss, sleep disruption fatigue, reduction in level of awareness, affect heart rate (anxiety) and a disturbance to our ability to perform work etc...

This was further exacerbated when the government abandoned its interest in noise pollution during the 1980's reducing resources and widening the exclusion from resolve for those marginalized minority communities. There was thence a continued plaque of noise stemming from ventilation systems, high decibel music, external equipment uses and crowd control which presents noise from people and a multitude of vehicles.

Today, we find sound barrier walls along our highways which surround our upper- and middle-class communities. Our local clubs must adhere to regulation of noise pollution as well as established hours of operation limitations imposed. And, we've been extended home insulation options, ear protectors, community limits upon noise making activities and stricter regulations. These options are extended to varied business establishments who are encouraged to install acoustic panels for sound-absorption, double-pane windows and proper speaker placement. Furthermore, these businesses must adhere to the statutory nuisance state laws, local ordinances and OSHA against noise control. Citations can be issued with penalty as monetary fines, limitation of operational hours (Abatement notices), and or litigation.

Lastly, we reflect and understand that our neighborhoods have become culturally integrated as our government and private industry has diversified its workforce; an act that one would think broaden the horizon for racial divides as our economic resources have to become culturally diverse. This may prevent continuous dismissal of such needs for every community.

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