

Today in History, Feb. 11

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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An old peasant smoking a pipe. **James Harbord**

317 years ago today, on Feb. 10, 1697, Peter the Great issued a decree allowing tobacco to be traded. Until then, using tobacco had been considered a sin comparable to homicide and was punished by nose-cutting or even a death sentence. In contrast, Russia now leads the smoking world with more than 2750 cigarettes consumed per person per year.

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