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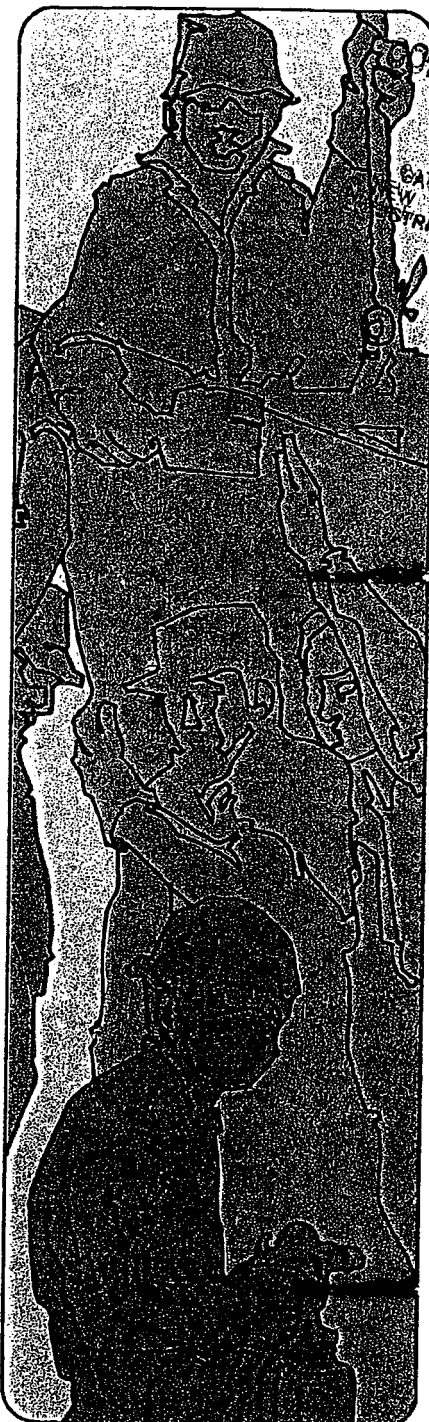
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Painters & Allied Trades Journal

AUGUST 1975

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Brotherhood skills on display

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Painters & Allied Trades Journal

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NEWS AND FEATURES

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designate them as "The Official Journal of
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Allied Trades Journal," either upon the
publication itself on their advertising
contract forms or stationery.

MICHAEL DISILVESTRO
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Washington, D.C. 20006

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AUGUST 1975

The official journal of the Interna-
tional Brotherhood of Painters and
Allied Trades, organized March 15,
1887, and the only publication issued
under its auspices.



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The Decade of Job Safety

Joint Committee, Evaluates Health Tests

Nothing is more important to our Brotherhood than safety and health, and in this area few activities are more important than the National Joint Safety and Health Committee which periodically brings together the accumulated experience of IBPAT, industry, and specialists in occupational safety and medicine.

The Committee meetings are but one aspect of IBPAT's wide-ranging safety program. General President S. Frank Raftery, at our 23d General Convention last September, declared this to be "The Decade of Job Safety." The Joint Committee is a vital component of IBPAT's efforts to provide our members with safe and healthful working conditions.

Preliminary findings of the IBPAT mobile medical van testing program were evaluated during a recent meeting of the National Joint Safety and Health Committee held at Brotherhood headquarters in Washington.

The Committee, comprised of members of our Brotherhood, members of our Brotherhood, contractor and industry representatives heard Dr. Irving J. Selikoff of the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, say that initial—but by no means final—test findings indicate that:

- IBPAT members do not seem to exhibit symptoms of lead poisoning;
- skin lesions (resulting from exposure to painting materials)

probably are not a major problem;

- respiratory problems associated with sandblasting are controllable if proper precautions are taken, although silicosis is still a serious problem;
- the effects of titanium on the over 200 paint makers who were examined with pulmonary and blood tests are awaiting further refinement of the blood test analysis;
- asbestos in spackling compounds has raised serious health questions as to its effect on both drywall finishers and painters who handle spackling compounds;
- the whole area of lung disease and the mixed dusts that are in the working environment of the painter, taper and floor coverer need further research; and
- further research is needed to determine the effects of various materials on the central nervous system of workers in the trade. The three areas of complaint with regard to central nervous system involve loss of consciousness, pre-narcotic symptoms and neurologic abnormalities.

The Committee, the only such "vertical" (manufacturer-contractor-labor) safety group in the U.S., elected IBPAT Research Director Francis X. Burkhardt its secretary. General Vice President Jack T. Cox is chairman of the Committee, which was formed following our Brotherhood's 1969 General convention. Representatives of IBPAT, the Painting and Decorating Contractors Association, Gypsum Drywall Contractors International, the National Paint and Coatings Association, Pittsburgh Paint and Glass Industries, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, and the Mount Sinai School of

Medicine attended the 1-day meeting.

Dr. Selikoff, director of Environmental Medicine at the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York, and the nation's leading authority on environmental medicine, showed Committee members slides which demonstrated the effect of asbestos on human lungs. He said that drywall finishers exposed to asbestos for less than 20 years have normal x-rays, while some drywall workers in the trade 20 or more years have "abnormal" x-rays.

Dr. Selikoff said that of 10 spackling compounds analyzed by his associates at Mt. Sinai, nine were found to contain asbestos. He indicated that mixing spackling compounds exposes the drywall finisher to 10 times the current air quality standard set by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration for such work. Sweeping the floor after sanding the finished wall also was found to expose workers to five times the current OSHA standards governing asbestos in the air.

In addition to the asbestos problems affecting both drywall finishers and painters, Dr. Selikoff observed that serious research must also be done with regard to the floor coverers members in our Brotherhood, especially, floor sanders who may be exposed to the same asbestos fibers as drywall finishers. Future examinations by Mt. Sinai will include floor coverers.

Dr. Selikoff indicated that whatever the exposure to airborne asbestos, a strong correlation exists between workers who smoke and workers who contract lung cancer. Dr. Selikoff has pointed out that asbestos workers who smoke cigarettes get lung cancer at a rate eight times higher than smokers who do not work with asbestos.

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Shown at the meeting were slides of G. T. Deschamps, M.D., M.S.M., R. David B. Selikoff, M.D., M.S.M., and Francis X. Burkhardt, M.D., M.S.M., all of IBPAT, at the meeting.



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Dr. Selikoff's test findings—yet to be verified by further testing throughout the U.S. and Canada—are based on the examination results of more than 1,000 painters, paint makers and drywall finishers. Scores of Brotherhood members have been tested by IBPAT's Mobile Diagnostic Unit which has performed examinations in New York, Los Angeles, St. Louis and Toledo, Ohio.

The mobile diagnostic van, from which initial test results are coming in, is a cooperative effort of IBPAT and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which contracted with the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine to operate the van. Dr. Selikoff said that members are being tested for, among other things, exposure to titanium, lead, asbestos, silica, wood dust, quartz and polyvinyl chloride.

Serious findings of cancer and cirrhosis of the liver among workers exposed to polyvinyl chloride, a comparatively new substance, illustrates the need for continuous studies into new materials.

Polyvinyl chloride is just one example of the health hazards posed by rapidly changing technology. "The fact is, man has created a new

environment, but he has not created a new man," General President Raftery said.

"We still have the same physical characteristics that our ancestors had, we still need clean air to breathe, and clean water to drink. We have developed no second sight that tells us when a seemingly harmless vapor is doing insidious damage to our health," he said.

As a result of Dr. Selikoff's research to date, the National Joint Safety and Health Committee suggested that the following areas receive further study:

- Clinical studies (in progress),
- Workplace environmental evaluation,
- Toxicological evaluation of paint materials,
- Nervous system toxicity,
- Lung disease in painters—pathology,
- Cancer hazard; epidemiological, laboratory,
- Mutagenicity (laboratory), and
- Accidents

Continued testing is important, for IBPAT members consistently rank among the top five construction trades in the average number of worker's compensation awards they receive. Painters and allied tradesmen constantly face many work-related health hazards, whether working with compounds found in paint, varnish, solvents and exotic coatings, or with such materials as gypsum board. IBPAT members also work often in extremely dangerous places—atop skyscrapers or on bridges.

Exposure to low-level agents can cause chronic illness, and the onset of these illnesses often is not noticed. Therefore, they go unrecognized, uncounted and uncompensated.

"For years, attention has been on accidents, on what you can see happen, the loss of an arm, a leg, an eye, and the loss of life," General President Raftery has said.

"What we are concentrating on now is what you cannot see, materials that the microscope measures and the laboratory analyzes. The harmful effects of these chemicals can be just as disastrous, just as disabling, just as permanent, and death just as certain."

Shown during the recent meeting of the National Joint Safety and Health Committee in Washington are, from left to right: G. T. Destefano, PPG Industries, Dr. John F. Finklea, NIOSH, General President S. Frank Raftery, Dr. Irving G. Selikoff, MSSM, Richard H. Gimer, GDCI, Frank Chebatoris, GDCI, Ken Bridbord, NIOSH, John Pecoraro, IBPAT, Jack Cox, IBPAT, David Barr, IBPAT General Counsel, Robert Roland, NPCA, John Alfalone, IBPAT William Duval, IBPAT, Francis Burkhardt, IBPAT, Lou Sline, PDCA, Dr. William Nicholson, MSSM, William Belforte, PDCA, Carl Bradley, PDCA, and Kingsley Kay, MSSM. also present but not pictured were Alex Cepparulo, Richard Dye, Albert Ross, Peter Verkerke and James Damery, IBPAT, and Howard Leederman, GDCI.

