

AOA—H.R. 1283, ATTACHMENT No. 6

UNITED OPTICAL WORKERS UNION No. 878,
St. Louis 1, Missouri, July 24, 1958.

TO ALL LABOR UNIONS:

You recently received a package letter from the King Optical Company. This letter offered very cheap eyeglasses to all union members and their families. Mr. Ritholz owner of King Optical Company, is a noted union hater. He is well known to the Chicago Federation of Labor. He is a braggart and brags openly that he destroyed the Dental Workers union affiliated with the A. F. of L., in Chicago away back in 1930. Oh, yes. He used to sell mail order dentures too. In fact an organizer for the Chicago Federation of Labor was shot to death in that fight. Mr. Ritholz also brags he destroyed the Optometrists Union A. F. of L., also back in the early thirties. There is no question about that he really did do it.

In 1936 or 1937 while this writer was helping the Chicago Optical Workers Local Mr. Ritholz locked out 130 A. F. of L., Optical Workers and the lockout lasted over four years. The case went through the Labor Board. The decision of the board was against Mr. Ritholz and the Ritholz Optical Company. That was not enough for Mr. Ritholz he dragged the matter through every court in the land.

Finally the court ordered him to deal with the Chicago Local. That is how he finally gained a union shop. More recently in the City of Detroit King Optical Company again owned by Mr. Ritholz destroyed the union in his Detroit King shop.

Mr. Ritholz loves to disrupt and destroy. He is also an apostle of the belief that everyone regardless of their station in life has a price. In fact he was convicted in Michigan for trying to bribe a member of the State Board of Optometry. That incident happened just a few years ago. Mr. Ritholz started his Kings store by hiring broken down Medical Doctors to examine peoples eyes. In some instances these were ex Venereal Doctors. Apparently the Medical Association put a stop to that. Now he hires registered Optometrists. These Optometrists usually have an office on the same floor as the King Optical Company. They are not supposed to be connected to King Optical Company. However they do not fit glasses as all other Optometrists do but they send patients to King Optical Company. There is a law against price advertising of optical goods in the State of Missouri. So King gets around the law by these methods.

No language we can use is strong enough to condemn the practices of King Optical Company. King Optical Company in the State of Missouri is 100% Non-Union.

For best eye care for you and your families go to any Occultist (Medical Doctor) Registered Optometrist or Optician.

They are all listed in the phone book. There you can be sure of proper care and attention.

Later on we will send you a list of the Union Optical Houses in the St. Louis Area.

Fraternally yours,

THOMAS E. ANDERT,
President, United Optical Workers Local 878, IUE-AFL-CIO.

[AFL-CIO News, July 12, 1958. Page 3]

FIRM ASKS LABOR HELP AFTER BUSTING UNION

DETROIT—The King Optical Company an interstate chain with a record of union-busting and Labor fighting, is now trying to soft-talk local unions into helping it sell eyeglasses to their members, according to Cass Suski, president and business representative of Optical Workers Local 932.

The Local formerly held bargaining rights at the branch here. But it had to strike for four months and go to court because the company refused to live up to its contract, Suski said. The agreement expired while the litigation was still going on he added, and the company coerced enough employees into quitting the union to cost it, its bargaining rights.

(The following letter was subsequently received for the record:)