



Boeing workers prepare a B-17 cabin in 1937.

signed for all industries within communities.” No organizers were appointed for California until 1938 and only then to counter the United Auto Workers of the CIO. The Boeing IAM Lodge warned that its wage scale, even if it was still only on a par with unskilled lumber workers in the area, was undermining Boeing’s competitiveness, threatening their members’ jobs, and preventing any improvements for them. “We are stalemated with Boeing until other plants are organized and a basic scale is set for the industry . . . our present scale already interferes with competitive bidding.”⁶³

Had these local officials received the full support of the IAM in 1936–1939, the difficulties of organizing plants apart from Boeing probably would have been insurmountable. Activists at Douglas despised the Machinists for their 1934 obstructions and were not about to let them benefit from a “lot of hard work in an uphill battle with Douglas.” Adding to such grudging feelings were the conservatism and elitism of most skilled aircraft workers, their resentment for the growing numbers of unskilled workers—“celery pickers”—and the fact that the struggle for