



## PARIS: BIGGEST EVER

First report, illustrated mainly with "Flight" photographs and drawings

PARIS '67 IS BIGGER AND WETTER, but it's the mixture as before. Largely encompassed by, on one hand, the full-scale Card-board Concorde, and on the other a lath-and-plaster X-15, it is at once the most international and intensely nationalistic of airshows. The pattern follows 1965—with the Russians concentrating on civil aircraft and space; the Americans on military aircraft and space; ever more helicopters and fleets of light types. But in the whole vast gallimaufry of tightly parked aircraft, in the sprawling exhibition halls and national pavilions and the serried ranks of *chalets de réception*, there is not one surprise and little that is entirely new. Before the question is asked, the answer is no—the Russian SST has not darkened the Le Bourget sky so far.

The Concorde mock-up, a thing of gleaming grace and beauty, deservedly dominates the static park, with the Vostok space vehicle earning great attention too. The Concorde could be said to have performed its first public service last weekend when beneath its wings it sheltered an ogive crowd from the torrential rain which made Friday and Sunday days of soggy misery. (The An-22, with high-aspect ratio, high-mounted wings, was an indifferent umbrella). Reports of a dispute as to whether a Frenchman or a Briton should be the apex of the crowd so formed are probably apocryphal, but they serve to emphasise the nationalistic tensions which develop in the hothouse atmosphere of the Salon. If rampant dispute is not evident in the Concorde context, and even though BAC and Breguet radiate apparently sincere sweetness and light about the Jaguar, collaboration is not the message of this show. While British firms generally emphasise it—to an excessive extent, perhaps, with Westland and others having their stand captions *only* in French—the French companies, with the exception of Breguet, pay scant regard to it. In particular, last Saturday's unveiling at Melun-Villaroche of the Mirage G swing-wing aircraft (when the AFVG was not even mentioned until British journalists raised the question),

together with the appearance on the Dassault stand of a private-venture Mirage G development offered as a naval alternative to AFVG, make the prospects for this ostensibly BAC/Dassault partnership look increasingly bleak.

In 1965 the kudos in the pop publicity stakes went to the USSR, with the appearance of the gross and unexciting An-22. This year, the Concorde mock-up and Lockheed's gleaming civil StarLifter (which, with its civil Hercules stablemate and the Super Guppy, are the only heavy US commercial aircraft present) diminish the An-22. But the Soviet publicity *coup* in 1965 has resulted in the US mounting an integrated national display for the first time ever at such a show.

The approach to the US pavilion is via "Mock-up Mile". This begins beneath a model of the Jefferson Memorial Arch, which spans a flying replica of Lindbergh's *Spirit of St Louis* and passes, on the left, the flags of most nations and, on the right, a pictorial presentation of the development of aviation and space exploration. It then passes the mock-up X-15 and enters the cool, dark passages of the US national exhibit. All honour to the States, in this most chauvinistic of shows, for emphasising the universality of aviation; the collection of flags really does include the hammer and sickle, the outside walls of the US pavilion carry the names of the *world's* great air pioneers; and the pictorial progression clearly shows the Comet 1 as the world's first commercial jet airliner, and Sputnik 1 as the first artificial satellite.

Heading picture: Symbolising both the nationalism and the internationalism of the show, the full-scale aluminium-skinned replica of the Concorde is furnished and open to the public. Its realism might even deceive an engineer, and its grace impresses everyone