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| Leacock, Richard (1921-2011) |
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| British-born documentary filmmaker Richard Leacock (1921-2011) was a pioneer in ideological and methodological approaches to early 1960s observational documentary, predicated on the use of the new, lightweight, handheld cameras and portable, synchronous, sound recording equipment associated with American direct cinema. Leacock referred to his approach as the ‘Living Camera,’ through which he sought to communicate what he expressed as, simply, ‘the feeling of being there.’ Revolutionary technological breakthroughs developed by Leacock, producer Robert Drew, and filmmakers D. A. Pennebaker and Albert Maysles in the early 1960s allowed for sound and image to be recorded in complete synchronisation independent of any physical connectivity, and gave filmmakers a new way to observe and interact with the world. Leacock’s style went beyond candid observation by demanding a participative role in the unfolding action. As demonstrated in his seminal *Happy Mother’s Day* (1964), the ‘Living Camera’ bears the marks of physical contact with the pro-filmic world, and seeks communication with the film’s social actors — a process in which the recording of direct sound is crucial. In 1968, Leacock cofounded the MIT Film Section with fellow documentarian Ed Pincus. Upon retiring in 1989, Leacock relocated to Paris, where he continued to make films until his death in 2011. |
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| Further reading:  (Bachmann)  (Blue)  (Leacock)  (Leacock, For an Uncontrolled Cinema)  (Mamber)  (Marcorelles)  (Naficy)  (O’Connell) |