Professor Lichtenstein will argue that neoliberal globalization and rustbelt decline, against which Donald Trump polemicized so effectively in 2016, was hardly an inevitability at the outset of the Clinton presidency. The Republicans of the Reagan-Bush 1980s were far more ambivalent about free trade and financialization than conventional wisdom holds; more important, the Clintonites came into office with an abundance of plans for reorganizing American capitalism, from the “managed trade” designed to aid Detroit and Pittsburgh to health insurance reform and an initiative to begin the reorganization of American work life. Clinton’s failure had many sources, personal and political, Lichtenstein argues, but perhaps the most important was that his team failed to appreciate the degree to which corporate and financial power had already divorced itself from the confines of a nation-state over which Clinton presided and sought to reform.

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Lichtenstein’s first book was Labor’s War at Home: the CIO in World War II, first published in 1983 and revised in 2002. In the 1980s through the first decade of the 21st century he was part of the editorial collective that wrote and revised the textbook, Who Built America? Working People and the Nation’s History. In 2012, and the Sidney Hillman Foundation awarded him its Sol Stetin Award for lifetime achievement in labor scholarship.

He is currently writing a history of economic thought and policymaking in the administration of Bill Clinton. With Gary Gerstle and Alice O’Connor he has edited Beyond the New Deal Order: From the Great Depression to the Great Recession, forthcoming in the Fall from University of Pennsylvania Press. Lichtenstein writes for Dissent, Jacobin, New Labor Forum, and American Prospect.