“Mandela: Was he pushed or did he jump?,” by Patrick Bond

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Patrick Bond’s piece “Mandela: Was he pushed or did he jump?,” posted At Links International Journal of Socialist Renewal, graphically describes the catastrophic transition from South African apartheid to today’s neoliberalism – a sobering cautionary tale for all fighting for radical democratic change today – in Greece, in the U.S., in the Middle East, and beyond. Even though the neoliberal pressures are enormous, we all need to think about strategic alternatives. Here’s a taste of the article: Bond writes, “Thus, even as racist laws were tumbling in parliament and as the dignity of the majority black population was soaring, the TEC accepted, on December 1, 1993, an $850 million loan from the IMF, signed first by subsequent Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan. It was ostensibly for drought relief, although the searing drought had ended 18 months earlier. The loan’s secret conditions – leaked to *Business Day* in March 1994 – included the usual items from the classical structural adjustment menu: lower import tariffs, cuts in state spending, and large cuts in public sector wages. In addition, Michel Camdessus, then IMF managing director, put informal but intense pressure on incoming president Mandela to reappoint the two main stalwarts of apartheid-era neoliberalism, the finance minister and central bank governor, both from the National Party…. The question raised by the failure of Mandela’s government to solve all these foundational problems is whether matters could have been different if activists and leadership had agreed on a strategy of transformation based on popular empowerment, as well as renewed international solidarity to change global power relations.”