

TRANSCRIPT MARINE LE PEN ANDREW MARR

You have said that Donald Trump's victory is a world-changing moment. How does it change the world?

Clearly, Donald Trump's victory is an additional stone in the building of a new world, destined to replace the old one. Obviously, we have to compare this victory with the rejection of the European constitution, by the French people, of course, with the Brexit vote, but also with the emergence of movements devoted to the nation, patriotic movements in Europe. All the elections are essentially referendums against the unfettered globalisation that has been imposed upon us, that has been imposed upon people, and which today has clearly shown its limits.

A lot of people have said that the victory of Donald Trump makes the victory of Marine Le Pen in the presidential elections in France much likelier. Do you agree with them?

Well, he made possible what had previously been presented as impossible. So, it's really the victory of the people against the elite. So if I can draw a parallel with France, then yes, I wish that in France also the people upend the table, the table around which the elite are dividing up what should go to the French people. And so, this is going to be the real question of the presidential election. The presidential election is going to establish some real choices of civilisation. Do we want a multi-cultural society, following the model of the English-speaking world, where fundamental Islam is progressing and we see major religious claims, or do we want an independent nation, with people able to control their own destiny, or do we accept to be a region managed by the technocrats of the European Union?

Let me turn to culture and ask about the FN. Because you have a reputation as a party of being racist, and your own father used the phrase that the Holocaust was an accident or a detail of history, he said. Have you really changed as a party?

Listen, I cannot let you say something so insulting. As it happens, the National Front has never been guilty of racism. And I would like you to tell me exactly what sentence, what proposal in the National Front's programme is a racist proposal. Unless you consider, as I know the elites wish to do and have done for a long time, that all those who opposed the process of mass immigration are racists. But I disagree. I don't think it's racist to say that: we cannot take in all the poverty of the world, we cannot take care of hundreds of thousands of people arriving here, because our first obligation is to protect the French people, and establish solidarity amongst the French people, our own citizens. I don't see how that's racist. I don't

have a racial way of looking at things, but I see that many do have a racial view, such as when they explain the US presidential election. They say it's whites against blacks. I don't believe so, I believe that it's the forgotten people against precisely those who forgot them.

But that phrase a detail of history about the Holocaust, deeply upset and offended many Jewish people, for instance...

You know, of course, it's been 30 years, I've explained myself hundreds of times on this topic. I disagree with my father on this issue. I said in the clearest way possible that it was not a detail of the Second World War, but in fact the symbol of the Second World War. What else can I add?

There are millions and millions of Muslim people living in France, who are working hard, contributing to society, obeying the law, and doing their very best to live a good life in France. Can Muslims be good French citizens and be welcome in Marine Le Pen's France?

We are not going to welcome any more people, stop, we are full up! That is not the question. I don't judge people based on their religion. I'm not interested. I'm in favour of secularism, it's very important to me. I believe that it is part of France's identity. So, we judge French people obviously based on the way they respect the law, the French constitution, but never based on their religion. For me, if some people refuse to accept the French constitution, or to comply with French laws, if they refuse to comply with our codes, our values, our French lifestyles, well, we will act accordingly, but we shouldn't take into account, once again, their religion, no more than their gender or their origin.

Parties of the right whether they want to or not, tend to attract the extreme people. The National Front for instance has not come into agreement with UKIP in the UK because the leaders of UKIP regard the FN as too hard-line on some of these issues...

Sorry, no but objectively, there is, on the topic of immigration and the European Union, there is not a hair's breadth of difference between what UKIP thinks and what the National Front thinks, let's be truthful here. Maybe UKIP is trying to counter the demonization they are victim of by saying 'we are the good guys and the National Front are the bad guys', they can do so, but I don't feel obliged to follow this strategy, because frankly I feel it's a little bit ridiculous.

Now, you welcomed Brexit very much, and there's a poster behind me saying 'First Brexit, now France'. But unless you become French President, there's no chance is there of France actually leaving the EU?

Well, what I hope is that we do ask this question to the French people, and that in fact we ask this question to all Europeans too, because there is absolutely no reason why the European Union should continue moving forward in this totalitarian way – at some time we have to stop and ask the question to the people of the various European countries: Do you still agree with all this? Do you agree with what the EU has become? I am absolutely convinced that if we did ask the question through a referendum in each country, the elites would be in for another surprise!

What kind of relationship would your France have with Britain after Brexit?

I'm in favour of a multi-polar world, I believe that every country has the right to defend its own interests. That is why we have a negotiation, that is why we have diplomacy, to be able to, well, trade, of course negotiate while accepting the fact that everyone is entitled to defend their interests, especially their vital interests. And today there are a number of countries, of nations which protect their interests, and others which are not allowed to do so because the EU decided that they couldn't do so. The Brussels Wall will have come down, just like the Berlin Wall came down, and the EU, this oppressive model, will have disappeared, but the Europe of free nations will be born, and I believe this is what many Europeans are yearning for today.

Can you see why some people look at this new Europe, this Europe of free nations as you say, and they've all got borders around themselves, they're looking after their own trade, and defence interests, and they're [people are] worried about this. They say this is going back to the Europe of the 1930s, and things didn't go so well then....

Not at all, it's the Europe that worked that I'm talking about, the Europe of Airbus, the Europe of Ariane. Airbus and Ariane were projects between European countries and objectively speaking, they were great successes. What doesn't work is when you impose the same drugs on everyone, when clearly, if you will, the different countries are not suffering from the same disease, or that you want everyone to wear the same suit, but the suit will be too small and too big for everyone, except possibly for Germany, as they tailored it.

Now, there is one country in Europe which is pursuing old-fashioned, strong national interests, and that's Vladimir Putin's Russia. And at the moment, a lot of people are very worried by Russian sabre-rattling – by the use of the Russian military in the Baltics and elsewhere. And yet you're quite pro-Mr Putin. Can you tell us why we should not be so scared of him?

There is no reason to be scared, and this for a simple reason: we have, France and Russia, a very old relationship, and historically a relationship based on friendship. And objectively, as you said yourself, Russia is a European country, and so we'd better, if we want a powerful Europe, negotiate with Russia, and have cooperation agreements with Russia, commercial agreements with Russia. There is absolutely no reason why we should turn systematically to the United States and why we should neglect Russia or even lead a Cold War with them. Again, I'm in favour of a multi-polar world, I believe we should trade, discuss, negotiate, have balanced diplomatic relations with all the powers of the world, and I don't see a valid reason why we should recreate virtually, so to speak, this wall between European countries and Russia, except maybe to obey the orders of the United States which up until now have found an interest in this.

But nonetheless, Russia at the moment is intervening quite aggressively – it intervened in the American presidential election, it's intervening in Italy, there's a lot of cyber-attacks by the Russians, the Russian banks helped to fund your party as well. Is Russia not trying to destabilise the West in a dangerous way at the moment?

Well, I'm sorry, but I borrowed from a Russian bank, it might as well have been a bank from Guatemala or from Spain. The shame is that in France, French banks don't want to lend to the National Front because it is a way they have found to try to stifle democracy. If you do know a bank, by the way, please give me their details and I will be happy to go to them. But who is destabilising Europe today and its neighbours? It's the European Union. The United States have been very aggressive towards Russia lately. Why? Because the model that is defended by Vladimir Putin is radically different to that of Mr Obama. As for me, the model that is defended by Vladimir Putin, which is one of reasoned protectionism, looking after the interests of his own country, defending his identity, is one that I like, as long as I can defend this model in my own country.

One area where you and Donald Trump have been in agreement is your deep scepticism about NATO. And yet for a lot of people NATO is the Western defence against Russia. How would we be safer without NATO?

Again, NATO is continuing to exist even though the danger for which it was created no longer exists. This is the ambiguity of the existence of NATO today. What is NATO protecting us against exactly? Against a military attack from Russia? Just saying that brings a smile to my face. In fact, NATO has become, today, a tool for ensuring that countries that are part of it comply with the will of the United States. And that, to someone like me who is attached to the notions of independence and sovereignty, it is something that, once again, I find unbearable.

In this new world of nationalism, how long has the European Union got?

(laughs) As little as possible I hope. You must have noticed that each time a referendum is organised, each time an election is organised, each time it's anything to do with the EU, people express their disagreement and their hostility towards the EU. How long can a political system last even though it is not elected, and is working against the will of the people it is trying to rule? In a democracy, it shouldn't last for more than 2 minutes.

So: Brexit – Trump – what next?

Well, Marine Le Pen being elected French president.

So this is a Europe-wide revolution?

It's a global revolution.