

The summit of billionaires and moth-eaten monarchies

<https://www.dn.no/magasinet/marked/anthony-ritossa/martha-louise/prins-albert/toppmotet-for-milliardarer-og-mollspiste-monarkier/2-1-1417633>

Dagens Næringsliv ([Norwegian](#) for "Today's Business"), commonly known as **DN**, is a Norwegian newspaper specializing in business news. As of 2015, it is the third-largest newspaper in Norway. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dagens_N%C3%A6ringsliv_

It's called the world's largest and most exclusive gathering of rich families. Sir Anthony Ritossa's scandal-plagued investment seminars are a "Davos" for heirs, sheikhs and failed royal houses.

"I was the first to break out of being a traditional royal and actually make my money. If you've been following Prince Harry and Meghan Markle and how they've started their own lives, I was the first royal to do that. It's influenced a lot of my life. I haven't invested in companies, I've invested in people".

October 2021. Princess Märtha Louise holds the microphone on stage at the luxury hotel Waldorf Astoria Dubai Palm Jumeirah.

In the audience are reportedly representatives of some of the world's richest families. Or as the organizer of the "Sir Anthony Ritossa's Global Family Office Investment Summit" describes it:

"A summit representing some \$4.5 billion in investor wealth from sheikhs, royalty and leading businesses from more than 30 countries".

For more than ten years, Sir Anthony Ritossa has been organizing seminars where he brings together "family offices" - privately owned companies that manage the fortunes of powerful family dynasties - to meet money-seeking entrepreneurs. His latest conference so far was held in Dubai last weekend.

The entrepreneurs also get to meet a bunch of royalty of varying denominations. Most from long-defunct monarchies. Like Prince Rina Telesphore, head of the Royal House Andriakazomanga-Zafimbolamena, Prince Juan Jorge de Bagration-Mukhrani of Georgia or Queen Diambi Kabatusuila Tshiyoyo Muata of Congo.

On stage in Dubai, the Norwegian princess tells how she takes people to distant places and on inner journeys and recalibrates them, makes them start again. To get back to their roots.

After a warm round of applause, Princess Märtha Louise receives her reward. The session is filmed and posted on the Ritosa website.

The flamboyant Sir Anthony Ritossa presents her with a gilded statue of a falcon.

It is the Ritosa Lifetime Achievement Award.

"WHO THE HELL"

As the billionaires mingle in Dubai, former CIA lawyer, television producer and Vanity Fair

editor Adam Ciralsky starts digging into Ritossa's past. Who exactly is the 'nobleman' who generously hands out honorary awards to royalty and gathers some of the richest of the rich every year in luxury hotels in Dubai, Miami, Monaco and Riyadh?

How could a towering but unknown Australian with Marbella connections suddenly be embraced by a bunch of the world's richest families?

Or as Adam Ciralsky, model for the Netflix series 'The Recruit', put it:

"Sir Anthony's summits are so packed with dignitaries that many have failed to ask one fundamental question: Who the hell is Anthony Ritossa?"

- Anthony Ritossa promises access to wealth and power. But I began to sense that something was wrong. That Ritossa had fabricated a false identity," says Matthias Knab, consultant, hedge fund expert, owner of the news service Opalesque and advisor to the due diligence company Castle Hall.

Until 2018, Knab collaborated with Ritossa on his conferences, but suddenly broke off the partnership.

BROKEN PROMISES

In September 2002, a small note in the New York Times newspaper notes that 33-year-old Anthony Ronny Ritossa had married, that he was a broker at Morgan Stanley in New York, the son of a retired Sydney property developer and a graduate of Newcastle University in Australia. 20 years later, Ritossa is referred to as "his highness" and "sir" and claims to have a family history spanning six centuries starting in the Veneto region of Italy - as well as deep roots in the Middle East.

"A family that has been associated with investment excellence for generations", as his own website states.

At the very root of Ritossa's story about himself is that he is the heir to an olive empire in Italy. "The gnarled roots of the Ritossa olive groves have endured through war and natural disasters, through climate change and the rule of warrior princes, wealthy merchant kings and modern despots", as he himself describes it.

- Anthony Ritossa does not own a single olive tree. I started researching his back story, we found out that he bought olives at the market, had someone make oil, put his name on the label and shipped the bottles to New York. He had been doing olives for three years, very few people make big money from olives. A few years ago he was so broke that he had to borrow money from a friend of mine," Matthias Knab claims.

DN is sitting on court documents showing that in 2018 his mother changed her will and disinherited Anthony Ritossa. The inheritance was a piece of land in the eastern suburbs of Sydney. Following his mother's death, there is now a bitter inheritance feud in the Australian courts. Not an olive branch is mentioned.

CLOSED CIRCLE

The modern family offices emerged in the 19th century when the grim financier JP Morgan established the House of Morgan to manage the family's assets. Then the Rockefeller family followed suit.

Today, there are more than 7 000 family offices around the world, according to research firm Campden FB.

It was in this closed circle that the unknown Anthony Ritossa emerged with his seminars that were supposed to bring together "all the world's richest family offices and entrepreneurs to discuss the future of the planet, and perhaps more importantly, discuss and conclude investment deals".

"THE KNIGHT"

At some point, Anthony Ritossa transforms into sir and "Excellency". It is not the British Queen who has put the sword on Ritossa's shoulder, but the very forward-thinking Spaniard Sir Manuel Freire-Garabal y Núñez - who also holds the titles of lawyer, diplomat, journalist and academic.

In 2016, Núñez founded the Knights Society of Elviña with 55 select members ranging from politicians to nobility, royalty and, as he claims, great writers and entrepreneurs. It was in this private assembly that Ritossa received the titles of 'knight' and 'sir'.

Manuel Freire-Garabal y Núñez founded in 2016 the organization "The Knights Society of Elviña". It was in this private assembly that Anthony Ritossa received the titles of "knight" and "sir".

Manuel Freire-Garabal y Núñez started in 2016 the organization "The Knights Society of Elviña". It was in this private assembly that Anthony Ritossa received the titles of "knight" and "sir". Photo: NataliaGda/Wikimedia Commons

Freire-Garabal y Núñez himself has an affinity for dubious awards and orders. Among the honors he proudly flaunts is the "Colonel's commission" from the Governor of Kentucky. In addition, the Spaniard has received recognitions from cities such as Machu Picchu and North Miami Beach. He has been granted honorary citizenship in the region of Vakinankaratra and the city of Antsirabe, and in 2019 Cosmo Chic magazine put him on its list of 250 top influencers in the Middle East. Together with Anthony Ritossa, the Spaniard is also an advisor to "His Highness Mahmoud Salah Al Din Assaf" - Prince of Keserwan, Mamluk and Salahadin Sultanate".

- Good day, Sir Manuel.

- You may call me Manuel. I hold that title, but I only use it in marketing. When you want to get into certain circles.

Freire-Garabal y Núñez says that "The Knights Society of Elviña" was something he came up with during his studies to commemorate a battle during the Napoleonic Wars.

The honorary title "sir" was given out of courtesy and free of charge to Antony Ritossa. It is not a noble title, says Freire-Garabal y Núñez.

In 2021, Freire-Garabal y Núñez said in an interview with CEO Magazine that Sir Anthony Ritossa was a great leader and networker who did everything to build a better world.

Today, the tone is different.

- Anthony Ritossa builds castles in the air.

BLUE BLOOD

- Anthony Ritossa likes to shine with royalty. The more royalty at the seminars, the better, says Matthias Knab.

After the conference in Dubai, Princess Märtha Louise's manager, Carina Scheele, writes a letter of thanks that Ritossa later uses in the marketing of his own events.

"Dear Sir Anthony. We would like to express our deepest thanks for your warm welcome and thank you for having us all at this wonderful summit. On behalf of the Princess, I would also like to thank you for allowing her to display her thoughts and beliefs in this business-dominated setting. I think people enjoyed this fresh input between all the investment topics. The summit was very well organized and we enjoyed meeting new people and being part of it", Scheele writes.

- If you're super rich, you don't want your name in the press. With Anthony Ritossa, it's the complete opposite. It's all glitz and bling-bling. Real investors don't come to the Ritossa seminars. They smell a dead rat," says Matthias Knab.

Prince Michael of Yugoslavia is one of Ritossa's closest supporters. By day, the prince is a photographer based in Monaco. He got an unfortunate stain on his resume when, as a salesman at the fund Access International Advisers Ltd, he steered his clients to the fraudster Bernie Madoff. According to a testimony by whistleblower Harry Markopolos, in 2002 the Prince of Yugoslavia tried to persuade the then Prince Charles to put money into the Madoff system during a meeting on a polo field. Without success.

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CALLE THE LATE

Carl-Eduard Von Bismarck, great-great-grandson of the "Iron Chancellor" Otto von Bismarck, known as "Calle Bismarck" among friends, is a regular guest at the Ritossa seminars. Here he is photographed with his ex-wife Nathalie von Bismarck at a charity dinner in 2010.

Among the regulars at the Ritossa seminars is also "His Serene Highness" Prince Hermann Friedrich Fernando Roland of Leiningen, son of the Princess of Bulgaria and number 173 in the line of succession to the British throne. He is currently employed by a

Canadian bank and is also without family wealth.

"I like to joke that my family didn't give me money. That's why I work at the bank 12 hours a day", he said in an interview with the Canadian newspaper National Post in 2015.

Sure, there's a Napoleon there too. Jean-Christophe Napoléon Bonaparte is the great-great-great-great-great-granddaughter of Emperor Napoleon III, France's last monarch. Jean-Christophe Napoléon Bonaparte heads the investment firm Leon Capital. Through his mother, Princess Beatrice of Bourbon-To Sicily, he is a descendant of King Louis XIV of France and through his great-grandmother, Princess Clementine of Belgium.

Among the notables on the program of this year's conference in Riyadh is Prince Francisco de Borbon von Hardenberg, descendant of the "Sun King" Louis XIV of France and the first Duke of Seville, grandson of King Charles IV of Spain. He too had no known wealth.

And then we must not forget the Habsburgs.

Francisco de Borbon von Hardenberg, descendant of the 'Sun King' Louis XIV of France, mingles with the billionaires at Ritosa's events.

A QUIRK OF THE HABSBURGS

The Habsburgs are probably better known for their fatal inbreeding and pointed jaws than their "fingerspitzengefühl". The so-called Habsburg Monarchy officially disappeared from the map in 1918, but made a small comeback at the Ritossa seminar in Dubai. The poster featured both "Her Imperial Highness Archduchess Herta Margarete Habsburg, Princess of Hungary, Croatia and Bohemia" and her husband Sandor. Who is also Prince of Tuscany.

- Classic investment banking is disappearing. I think the only ones taking this position in the financial market are the family offices. Anthony Ritossa is a prominent player in this niche market," Sandor said in an interview during the financial festival.

The family, who are not allowed to use their ducal titles in their native Austria, had come to Dubai to promote their very own peace movement: "The Association for the Furtherance of Peace.

Archduchess Herta Margarete Habsburg, Princess of Hungary, Croatia and Bohemia and her husband, Sandor Habsburg-Lothringen (left) also grace the Ritossa seminars. Here with Prince Albert of Monaco in Vienna in 2019.

According to the organization's website, it is one of "the most prestigious international peace awards given to heads of state, heads of government and civil servants".

So far, the Habsburgs have not got it right when it comes to choosing the recipients of their own peace prize, the 'Flame of Peace'. In 2009, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh was awarded the prize while engaged in a bloody war with Houthi rebels. A few years later, the prize went to Bahrain's Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa. At the time, Human Rights Watch had just pointed out that the Bahraini government regularly used torture and ill-treatment in interrogations.

In 2018, Herta and Sandor Habsburg unveiled a peace monument in the German city of Gera together with far-right conspiracy theorist Heinrich XIII Prinz Reuss. The same Reuss who recently found out that he was to become German head of state and absolute monarch by planning a vaudeville-style coup d'état in Germany.

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THE PHILANTHROPY

Can Norwegian lawyer Anthony Christopher Caffrey shed light on who Sir Anthony Ritossa really is? Together with Ritossa, he sits on the advisory board of the American charity BLI Global.

- Haha. Are you looking for a Norwegian who is with a person who might be questionable? I don't know Ritossa or his background and have never spoken to him. From what I see, he seems like a very nice guy, says Caffrey.

- "Mr. Anthony Ritossa has been a friend of BLI Global for several years and we appreciate his many efforts to help our team improve the lives of ordinary people in the poorest parts of the world. We have no reason to question his character, writes BLI's founder Maria Horne in an email to DN.

In late September 2022, Dutch businessman Ademar Van der Heijden began to question Ritossa. Van der Heijden took Ritossa to court in his home country and demanded a refund of his participation fee for the Ritossa seminar in Riyadh in spring 2022.

Van der Heijden claims that less than ten percent of the rich families featured in the brochure showed up.

TO LIVE AND LET LIVE

The Ritossa seminars are a feast for the mantelpiece, with a few places awarding several rare prizes and awards.

- "The Ritossa Lifetime Achievements Award was given to all the speakers at the seminar, so there is no special reason other than that," says manager Carina Scheele Carlsen about the golden falcon given to Princess Märtha Louise by Anthony Ritossa.

The awarding of the Order of Merit of the Star of Liberland is a regular feature of the Ritossa seminars. Both Ritossa himself and Prince Michael of Yugoslavia have personally received the medal from Liberian President Vít Jedlická.

Liberland?

For the uninitiated, the "Free Republic of Liberland" is a seven square kilometer no-man's land between Croatia and Serbia with its own flag, stamps, two vice-presidents, five ministers, a house and the motto: "To live and let live".

Here, Czech politician Vit Jedlicka dreams of building a liberal paradise where taxes would be voluntary. Apparently, he was inspired by an American farmer who in 2015 declared the Kingdom of North Sudan in a desert spot between Sudan and Egypt to fulfill his daughter's dream of becoming a princess. The official promotional material for Liberland states that the "nation" wants to combine the best elements of the American republic, Swiss democracy and the meritocracy of Singapore.

One of Jedlička's first "state visits" was to Norway. There he gave a speech for the Liberalist party, which advocated that Norway should recognize Liberland as a state. The Liberland leadership has also organized a conference in the Canary Islands together with the Norwegian right-wing extremist Hans Jørgen Lysglimt Johansen.

"I want my sons and their entire generation here in Europe and globally to explore space in a private spaceship instead of filing bureaucratic paperwork on Earth", said a perfectly plausible statement by Jedlička on the Liberland website in 2019.

The awarding of the Order of Merit of the Star of Liberland is one of the highlights of the Ritossa seminars. The "Free Republic of Liberland" is a seven-square-kilometer no-man's land governed by Czech politician Vit Jedlicka.

NOBEL NOMINEE

Anthony Ritossa is also no stranger to a peace prize. 2021 he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, according to him. By whom and why has until now been unknown.

The Norwegian Nobel Institute never confirms or denies who is nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize until 50 years have passed.

A correspondence between former members of Anthony Ritosa's inner circle explains how it all fits together. DN has promised the sender anonymity, but knows his identity.

"Anthony Ritossa came to me in 2012, completely broke and asked if I could help him with his business. He came on a borrowed bicycle. The result of our collaboration was the conferences," writes the academic from Central Europe.

"Anthony nominated himself for the Nobel Peace Prize, and nominated me as the nominator, because I am employed by an institution that can nominate. He informed me of this only later," the letter reads.

HONORARY DOCTORATE AND RUSSIAN KNIGHTS

Despite failing to charm the Nobel committee, Ritossa's neck is constantly burdened with new medals and honors.

During his own seminar in Monaco in 2021, he will receive the "Grand Cross of the Royal Order of Banu Assaf", awarded by Prince Mahmoud Salah Al Din Assaf. Assaf also gives him a professorship and an honorary doctorate at the online university Al-Khalifa Business School. This is headed by the enterprising Spaniard Manuel Freire-Garabal y Núñez.

In addition to the Prince, the university is run by an unorthodox group of academics. The university's dean is "His Excellency Professor Sir Igor Olegovich Eleferenko", former

bureau chief of the Russian state news agency Ria Novosti in Argentina and Cuba. He is also a Cossack chief and a Maltese knight. Also on the university's board is Sergei Pecheliev, vice-rector of the Moscow State Institute of International Politics - MGIMO. Since it was founded by Stalin in 1944, MGIMO has been the school of diplomacy and linked to Russia's secret services. Pecheliev is, according to his own website, linked to the Military Academy of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces and active in the Russian Orthodox Church.

A CV that should be more than incriminating for the head of a British registered school.

Or is it?

- I don't care about politics. I'm an ordinary man who wants to do something beautiful for the world. Not everyone on the Russian side is a devil, and not everyone in Ukraine is an angel," says Freire-Garabal y Núñez, founder of the school.

THE REVELATION.

In October 2022, Adam Ciralsky publishes his article on Anthony Ritossa in Vanity Fair magazine. The year-long investigation ends in a character assassination in which Ritossa is described as a Wall Street flop, an inveterate fabulist with a fake resume who fancifully claims to be the heir to a 600-year-old European olive oil fortune. According to Vanity Fair, he is not a professor, does not have the Harvard degree he claims, has no family fortune or distinguished career on Wall Street and has been arrested several times. In addition, several of the entrepreneurs at the Ritossa seminars say they feel cheated by sky-high fees and little payoff. Vanity Fair gets access to documents that show that Ritossa charges between 18,000 and 200,000 dollars to let entrepreneurs meet investors and royalty. To DN's knowledge, Ritossa has not been convicted of the offenses DN mentions.

While working on the disclosure, Prince Albert of Monaco also resigns as "royal patron" of the Ritossa seminars.

"I have recently been alerted to the fact that the organizer of the events called "Sir Anthony Ritossa's Global Family Office Investment Summit", which takes place in Monaco, does not meet the necessary requirements of the Principality in terms of transparency, ethics and professional conduct", Prince Albert writes in a letter reproduced in Vanity Fair.

"In these circumstances and as a precautionary measure, it has been decided that my protection will no longer be granted for all the organizer's future events to be held in Monaco, thus refusing any direct or indirect support from the Principality of Monaco".

FAKE SHEIKER

The Vanity Fair revelation went viral, with Bloomberg magazine putting it on its annual 'envy list' - the list of articles it would have liked to have written itself. "Many people probably wrote off Anthony Ritossa as shady but unimportant. Ciralsky, however, started digging and uncovered a classic tale of how lies breed more lies that eventually, infallibly, collapse under their own weight," Bloomberg writes.

The financial magazine Spear's followed up the article in January this year with an interview with Tobias Prestel of Prestel & Partner - a long-time organizer of family conferences.

"He promised them the richest Arab sheikhs, and he promised the Arab sheikhs rich foreigners. So he lied to both, and could never deliver. As they call it in England: there was a room full of barbers trying to sell each other a haircut", comes from Prestel.

- "I have good sources that he hired actors who dressed up as sheikhs," Matthias Knab tells DN.

Spaniard Sir Manuel Freire-Garabal y Núñez, who made Ritossa a "knight", also finds it necessary to distance himself from his old friend.

- "After the article we started to question him, so we no longer have any relationship with him or business with him," Manuel Freire-Garabal y Núñez told DN.