



## The don't-let-it-happen-here committee

Tomorrow's company today

Friday February 14, 2003

[The Guardian](#)

Things are clearly getting serious. Frank Partnoy, a former Wall Street trader who has bolted into academia, puts his view in The Guardian today that the collision of corporate greed and technology over the past decade or so has caused a terrifying cultural shift in the world of business and the markets. He fears that the entire system is spinning out of control.

Over here, an impressive team of business leaders and market professionals launched a self-funded inquiry yesterday to decide whether (to put it bluntly) the entire investment system needs to be torn up and reconstructed.

Despite its absurd name, a think tank called The Centre for Tomorrow's Company has persuaded Sir Richard Sykes, the former Glaxo boss who is now rector at Imperial College, to chair a 15-strong inquiry team, whose members range from Cadbury Schweppes chief executive John Sunderland to Edmond Warner, the young Old Mutual executive who provides a weekly column for these pages.

They are inviting evidence and ideas on five topics: the design of the investment system, the impact on companies; the impact on pension funds, the impact on individual savers, and the impact of government intervention.

The Association of British Insurers and National Association of Pension Funds are backing the exercise, as are the Bank of England, the Corporation of London and HM Treasury. And then there is a long list of individuals who have agreed to endorse the inquiry, ranging from Sir John Banham, now chairman of Whitbread, to the energetic Paul Myners, the former Gartmore boss who now chairs the finely engineered Guardian Media Group.

So don't expect wise-cracks about tomorrow's companies being designed by yesterday's white men here.