A CONVERSATION WITH DR. GEORGE J. SEFA DEI

Topic: The Spatiality of Blacknesses in Academia
Time: Friday, November 27, 6 PM - 8 PM
Moderators: Ahmed Ilmi & Rukiya Mohamed

Abstract: Black bodies continue to live through colonial violence. We must continually develop the power to re-write/re-tell our stories through our pain, vulnerabilities, suffering and resistances. In this conversation, George Dei draws upon the lessons of a personal travelogue of a Black/African body in academia to articulate the ‘spatiality of Blacknesses’ as shared and contested insurrections. Building on existing scholarship, Dei situates body, politics, Lands and geographies in discursive analysis and political practice of educational change. The discussion highlights what it means to talk about Blacknesses, the effects of the geo-spaces of Blacknesses for progressive politics in the academy, and its implications for the Black scholar and Black scholarship within the current global context of anti-Blackness and anti-Black racism. Beyond the interrogation of the capitalist consumption of Blacknesses, George Dei wants us to think about the when, why and how Black existence comes into [mainstream] public consciousness; and what to make of the paradox of asking us to understand working-class angst/anger with the economic system and yet deny Black rage, pain and suffering?

Key discussion questions (responded to during the webinar):

- How does the spatiality of Blacknesses within the confines of institutions get instrumentalized? What does that look like in our institutions?
- How is the historical spatialization of Whiteness and the territoriality of Whiteness contested by Blacknesses? How is this resisted?
- How do racial spatiality and space-making gestures of Blacknesses become forms of institutional accounting?
- How are Black scholars envisioning and architecting new technologies of space-making that allow for the insurrection, disaffected and unruly Black scholar to be and inhabit space in academia?

Resources to extend learning:

- Slide deck presentation
- Webinar recording
- Bibliography - some works referenced during the webinar