ABSTRACT

This article explores the history and patterns of anti-Chinese xenophobia in Latin America and the Caribbean in the early 20th century. The specific case studies discussed are a series of anti-Chinese mob violence in Jamaica beginning in 1918, when Chinese immigrants were beginning to make their mark as grocers and shopkeepers; the massacre of 303 Chinese in 1911 by revolutionary forces in the northern Mexican town of Torreón, where K'ang Yu-wei and his Chinese Reform Association had established a bank, a streetcar company, large market gardens and other lucrative businesses; and the anti-Chinese political campaign culminating in mass expulsion that was directed by the post-Revolutionary Mexican state at the onset of the Great Depression to consolidate power and advance state and nation building. The root causes and deployment of sinophobia appear more complex than simply crude racism.