

**Isaiah Berlin Online, OA.1052**

**Lai, Chen, and others, ‘Zhongguo duzhe weishenme fen Bolin?’ [‘Why do Chinese Readers Like Berlin?’], three interviews with *Zhonghua dushubao* [*China Reading Weekly*] no. 215, 18 May 2011, 9**

**Chen Lai, director of the Academy of Chinese Learning, Tsinghua University, specialist in Chinese philosophy:** Although Rawls has been the most important political philosopher since the 1970s, IB is more popular in China. The distinction between IB’s two concepts of liberty has a shocking effect on Chinese people when they reflect on modern Chinese history. Besides, from the 1990s onwards liberalism became an important intellectual current in China, so it is very natural that Berlin’s philosophy should begin to be taken very seriously. In the 1980s there was a Max Weber boom, and in the new century there is a Berlin boom.

**Hu Chuansheng, Jiangsu Province Academy of Social Sciences, translator of FEL:** At the end of the 1990s there was a fierce argument in China between members of the New Left and Liberals. For the first time in modern Chinese history, Chinese intellectuals raised these issues and discussed them independently. At that moment, Berlin’s philosophy became a foreign resource. Because of the condition of liberty in China, his philosophy has a strong influence. Berlin’s impact on China comes less from his analysis of liberty than from his pluralism, which is more important.

**Qian Yongxiang/Sechin Y.-S. Chien (see Qian 1997):** IB’s style is different from Rawls’s analytic one. We could call IB a dialogic thinker. Although it is difficult to translate into Chinese, IB’s style is more acceptable to Chinese readers, and they can strongly identify with what he says. IB’s thought may not be systematic, but he has a strong sense of reality. If Chinese academics want to study Western thought, IB is a good place to start and they can learn a great deal from him.