This paper is intended to introduce German-reading undergraduates to two of the most influential twentieth-century historians of modern Germany, Eckart Kehr and Friedrich Meinecke. Each made a distinctive contribution to the development of modern German historiography: Meinecke was perhaps the most influential of all the later historicists; Kehr was an inspiration to the so-called critical school of social history, whose emphasis on the primacy of socio-economic factors in politics has informed an immense literature since he was ‘rediscovered’ by Hans-Ulrich Wehler in the 1960s. The set passages of the two authors not only give students a flavour of their methodology, but also introduce some of the key historical debates which relate to the period 1870-1945. In general, the paper provides an introduction to the continuing debate on the ‘peculiarity’ of modern German history and allows students to become familiar with the so-called Sonderweg (‘special path’) theory.