



# Chronicling 100 Years of the U.S. Economy

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## Top Influencers

The Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and its journal, the *Survey of Current Business*, are respected sources of data on the health of our national economy due in large part to the individuals who influenced BEA and its predecessor agencies over the past century. From economic theory to the mechanics of producing reliable statistics, their contributions helped make BEA and its accounts the reliable, authoritative sources of economic data they are today. The *Survey* has chronicled the evolution of BEA's output for almost a century.

As we celebrate the centennial of the *Survey*, some of these top influencers will be profiled on the [centennial website](#). This month, we present economist **George Jaszi**.

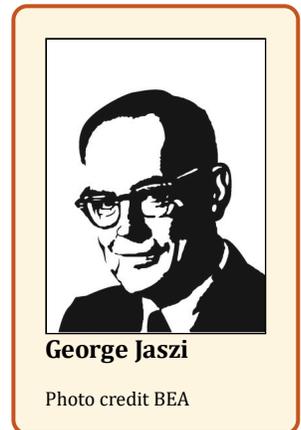
## George Jaszi

### An Architect of the National Economic Accounts and BEA

During his 43-year career at the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) and its predecessor agencies, George Jaszi had an exceptional impact on BEA, its body of work, and its flagship journal, the *Survey of Current Business*. Jaszi was one of the four original BEA economists who created the two-sided economic accounting framework that is in use today.<sup>1</sup> He also helped develop the first measures of constant-dollar gross national product. He was an innovator throughout his time at BEA.

Jaszi's broad and deep influence at BEA was due in part to the multiple roles he held over the decades, some simultaneously. Jaszi was the Director of BEA for close to a quarter century, where he emphasized that BEA's role was to provide information for the policymakers, not make policy itself. For most of that time, he was also Editor-in-Chief of the *Survey*, overseeing the publication of 260 issues. In addition, he was a part-time academic at many Washington, DC, universities, where he would scout the talent and recruit the best students for employment at BEA.

Jaszi was very active in professional organizations and the recipient of many government awards for his service to the nation, including the Gold Medal of the Commerce Department and the Career Service Award of the National Civil Service League in 1956, the Rockefeller Public Service Award in 1974, and the Distinguished Executive Rank Award in 1980.



Jaszi's impact was not limited to his body of professional work; he left a lasting impact on his colleagues, too. Those who worked with him described his meticulous attention to proper English grammar—an even more impressive feat because English was his second language. They described his love of literature and art and great conversations. He also loved to sketch and shared many with his colleagues.

We are pleased to reprint an editorial written by Carol S. Carson<sup>2</sup> about Jaszi's professional accomplishments at the time of his retirement from BEA in 1986. This [profile](#) details his impressive and lasting contributions to the National Economic Accounts as well as the internationally recognized System of National Accounts.

Jaszi lived another 6 years after retirement before passing away at the age of 77 in December 1992.

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1. Jaszi was joined by Edward Denison, Milton Gilbert, and Charles F. Schwartz in developing this framework.

2. Carson became Editor-in-Chief of the *Survey* upon Jaszi's retirement, and like Jaszi, served as a Director of BEA. See her [centennial kick-off article](#) published in the July 2020 *Survey*.