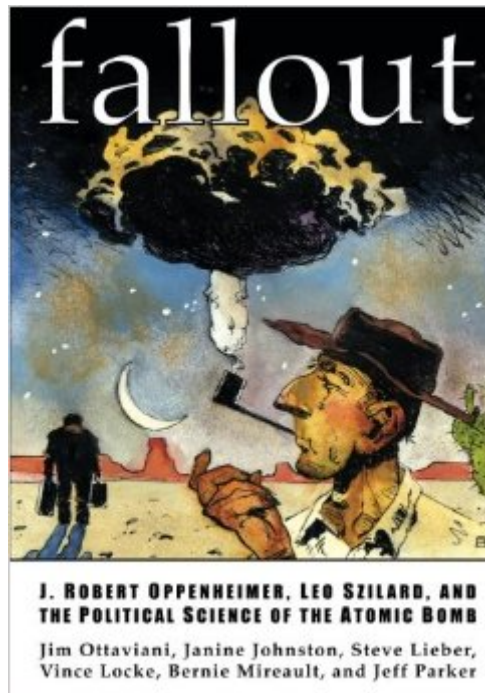


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Fallout: J. Robert Oppenheimer, Leo Szilard, And The Political Science Of The Atomic Bomb



Synopsis

So, you've always wanted to learn how to build an atomic bomb? You're in luck: Jim Ottaviani is not only a comics writer...he also has a master's degree in nuclear engineering! But even though it's not a complete do-it-yourself manual (assembly required, and plutonium is definitely not included), *Fallout* will bring you up to speed on the science and politics of the first nuclear gadgets. Like its companion volumes, the focus of *Fallout* is on the scientists themselves -- in particular J. Robert Oppenheimer and Leo Szilard, whose lives offer a cautionary tale about the uneasy alliance between the military, the government, and the beginnings of "big science."

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (9 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Fallout tells the back story of the development of the Manhattan Project, which developed the atomic bomb. The story focuses on Leo Szilard, a German scientist trying to outrace the Nazis, and Robert Oppenheimer, who led the project. Told by several graphics artist, each with a different style, the story tries to capture the complex blend of personalities who contributed to build the bomb. Oppenheimer is cool, refined and unflappable. Szilard is a ball of fire, running to and fro behind the scenes to get political support for the bomb and to procure graphite or uranium oxide for the tests. Enrico Fermi is aloof, detached and territorial, upset about Szilard's machinations, but wholly dependent on them. The story is fascinating and ultimately turns tragic, as America, newly victorious in the war, starts to turn its suspicions on its own loyal citizens, including Oppenheimer. The book loses a star for a several reasons. The change in style from one artist to another made it hard to

keep track of the characters. Then, too, many of the more interesting parts of the story were found in the Notes section. For instance, when lugging graphite blocks (used to build the reactor in Chicago) became too much for the pencil-pushing scientists, burly football players were enlisted to help. You would have to be psychic to figure this out from the drawings. There were many other instances in which the drawings did not communicate the story very well. In one three-panel section, Albert Einstein is shown thinking about whether to urge President Roosevelt to build the bomb. The Notes tell us that Einstein, a pacifist, was considering the political, moral and scientific aspects of his advice. But without the notes, who would know?

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