

last year.

They've also known for five years that they are facing these huge fines. None of the fines being proposed are at all outside of what people knew from the very beginning were likely to be part of the outcome — so BP has had five years to prepare financially, and it's its responsibility to be prepared for the fines and to be able to cover them, so it's totally ludicrous that it's finding it can't come up with the cash.

E.G.: Did BP split off the offshore arm prior to the spill?

A.J.: No, it only did it recently.

E.G.: Has BP made any changes in its practices that would help to prevent similar spills in the future?

A.J.: Not anything particularly noteworthy, no. And nor has the industry or the regulators. Some changes have occurred on the margins. There are more federal investigators to monitor offshore drilling operations in the Gulf of Mexico, for example. And the agency that makes money off of offshore drilling and that which regulates it in the U.S. are now two separate agencies. But, every expert I've interviewed is deeply concerned that it is not only "business as usual" in offshore drilling but that things are getting more dangerous as the companies drill even deeper and farther from shore.

E.G.: Five years later, how does the environment in the area around the spill and the community that depends on economic benefits tied to that area of the Gulf of Mexico compare to how it was prior to the accident?

A.J.: Some areas have been totally devastated, while others are recovered. It's a mixed picture, as it is a huge body of water and huge part of the country, and some parts were hit harder and longer than others. For example, the African-American fishing community of Point à la Hache, La., where I have spent a lot of time doing interviews, has been totally decimated. They are oystermen, primarily, and, after generations of making their living from oystering, those who could leave town did, and for those forced to stay, the outlook is grim. The hardest-hit beaches in Louisiana are still totally closed to shrimping, oystering, etc. But other areas are back to normal or even doing better than before the spill. Many animal species have suffered greatly, such as dolphins, which continue to die in dramatically larger numbers than before the spill. Oil still washes up on some beaches and still clogs marshes, adding to coastal erosion. But some beaches are pristine. It's going to be a long time before we know the full impacts.

E.G.: Here in Portland we have a track record for valuing socially responsible companies, yet our landscape is densely sprinkled with Chevron, ARCO, 76 and Shell gas stations. Environmental impact aside, do you have any examples from your research of how these oil companies are exploiting human rights?

A.J.: Working in the oil sector is now the most deadly job in America by an enormous margin, particularly because of the



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTONIA JUHASZ

Antonia Juhasz departs the Atlantis Research Vessel after joining a two-week research mission in 2014 at the site of the BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Juhasz's book "Black Tide" extensively covers the spill and its aftermath in the Gulf of Mexico.

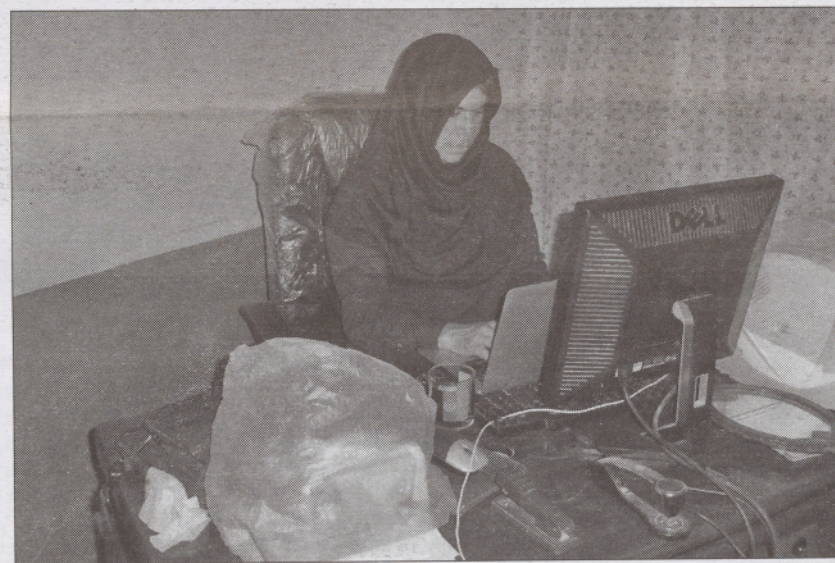


PHOTO COURTESY OF ANTONIA JUHASZ

Juhasz works as a reporter in 2012 from Afghanistan, where she followed the trail of oil reserves, interviewing villagers along the way. In an article for *The Atlantic* resulting from her tour of the country, she said, "The result is clear, and far from unique to Afghanistan: As development of the oil and gas sector has risen, so too has violence and insecurity."

dangerous Bakken region oil refineries. Communities that live next to refineries deal regularly with companies that just flagrantly break the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act for years and years and years — but the fines are so small, it doesn't matter, and the regulations are so infrequently implemented that it doesn't matter.

I've written extensively in my books, and in the three alternative annual reports on Chevron that I edited, about growth of oil companies abroad, and in these locations around the world, including Ecuador most recently — an Ecuadorian court held that Chevron owes that country billions of dollars for environmental human health abuse — there's a well-documented track record of

human rights abuses in the operation, production, transporting and refining of oil.

E.G.: Should the people of Portland be concerned about the crude oil being transported through their city?

A.J.: Most definitely. The National Transportation Safety Board, which is an independent federal agency that investigates transportation accidents in the United States, has said very clearly that regulations have simply not kept up with the dramatic increase in the amount of crude being transported by rail in the United States and that where possible, those trains should be diverted out of sensitive areas and population centers.

Attempted regulations have been quite weak but have started to trickle in. But the most significant change has only been voluntary measures by the industry to use what they are calling "safer cars" or "reinforced rail cars." The problem is that there's now been a slew of new crude-oil train incidents that have involved those new "safer cars," and those cars have punctured and exploded just like the weaker cars have. It seems like one of the main problems is that the primary type of crude oil being moved by rail in the United States is the Bakken crude from North Dakota, which is highly volatile and is more like a gasoline in that sense than traditional crudes, and that when the trains carrying Bakken oil derail — and as it turns out, trains derail a lot — they not only spill the oil they are carrying; they also have a tendency to explode, which is why they've been dubbed "bomb trains."

E.G.: This past September, you wrote an op-ed that urged the federal government to cancel its contracts with Exxon. At *Street Roots*, we reported on our city's recent purchase of \$20 million in ExxonMobil bonds. Why single out Exxon as the company to stop supporting?

A.J.: I had written a cover article for *The Advocate* magazine called "What's wrong with Exxon," and this was a follow-up. The cover article was written because ExxonMobil has the lowest score in the history of Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index. Exxon routinely gets negative 25 out of 100 possible points because not only do they not have protections and health benefits for their LGBT employees and their families, but when they acquire a new company, they