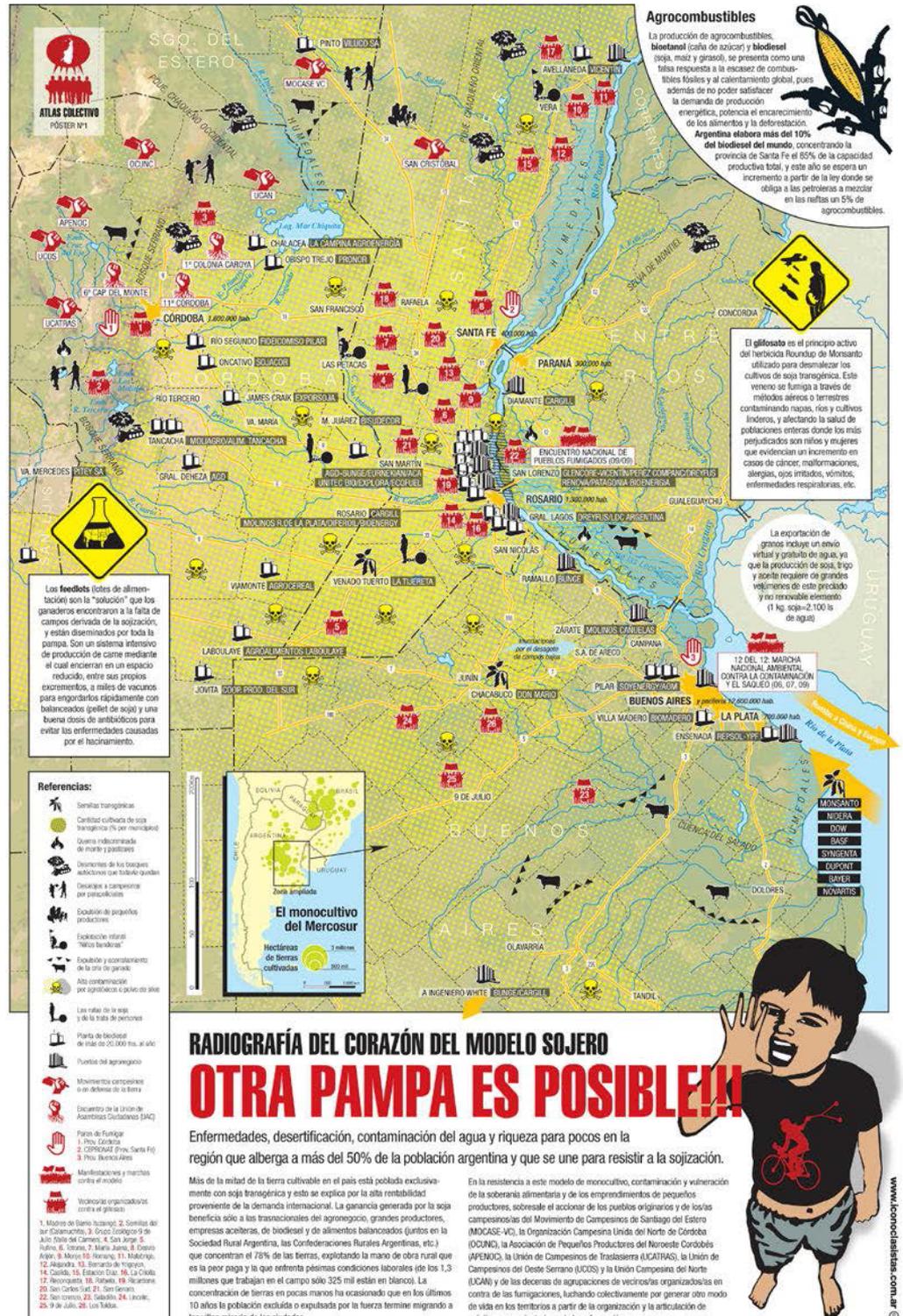# X-Ray of Soy Agribusiness in the Pampa and Mega-Mining in the Andes[1]

Iconoclasistas – Julia Risler, Pablo Ares
iconoclasistas.net

We are a duo formed in 2006. We combine graphic art, creative workshops and collective research to produce activist resources that can be circulated, used and appropriated freely. Through designing and carrying out workshops, we seek to strengthen the communication between activists, to set up networks of solidarity and affinity, and to promote collaborative practices of resistance and transformation. Through this dynamic web of affinity and solidarity, built by sharing and promoting open projects and collective workshops in Argentina, Latin America and Europe, our practice keeps on spreading.

We share our resources and practical experience on our website in order to not only set them free from barriers of private property but also from economic, physical and geographic restrictions. The website works as a multimedia support in order to spread and share the material we produce and to foster its appropriation through creative commons licenses. Resources uploaded to the web for reappropriation, reproduction and redefinition turn this virtual means into a collective tool through which hierarchies are dismantled and exchange is stimulated. In consequence, users become producers recurring to liberated production.

Creating resources for their free circulation as well as their particular drifts and reappropriations has transformed and broadened our practice. Constant exchange with and relations to other collectives, organizations and social movements has promoted a reciprocal influence encouraging us to incorporate new approaches, resources and topics. These have led us to rethink the way in which materials circulate, how strategies spread and how we engage in collective constructions. This political, affective and creative network gave way to itinerant exhibitions, collaborative creation workshops, new ludic resources and the participation in meetings with cultural organizations and social movements.

About the Maps

Between 2008 and 2010 we travelled across Argentina, setting up workshops in various cities of different provinces by contacting university students as well as cultural and communicational groups. In these spaces topics for collective reflection emerged. They were thoroughly analyzed and expanded when we participated in the 10th and 11th session of the Citizen Assemblies Union (UAC) in Jujuy and Córdoba, as well as in four meetings organized by the popular education collective Pañuelos en Rebeldía in Bariloche, Tucumán, El Dorado (Misiones) and in Ciudad del Este (Paraguay). During these sessions and meetings a heterogeneous group of social movements, social and environmental assemblies, organizations of peasants and native peoples, neighbors and citizens for the defense of common goods participated in creating accounts, marking situations and rendering visible the various types of organization and resistance of communities. During the first two days of the sessions in Jujuy we assembled a booth displaying maps and cards so that participants could approach the desk to share their knowledge about conflicts and resistances taking place within the different regions in Argentina. During the third and last day a map was presented. This map was systematized and depicted the following question: Keeping in mind that we were designing a map to be circulated in public, should we also depict the resistances and achievements of organizations? This dilemma was positively resolved in a second session in Córdoba when dozens of representatives of assemblies and communities, after having corrected and verified data, voted on the importance of rendering visible resistances in the maps of the public domain by a show of hands. After the systematization of these meetings two major issues were identified:

The Model of Agribusiness
and the Consequences to Transgenic Monoculture
A complex issue, which emerged in the workshops organized in the city of Córdoba, Rosario (Santa Fe) and the districts of Morón, La Plata, San Andrés de Giles, Olavarría, Tandil and Bahía Blanca, among others. These mappings revealed a type of agricultural production concentrated within a few hands and produced with a technological package consisting of machines, transgenic seeds, herbicides and highly toxic and polluting pesticides (see map on opposite page).

Open Pit Mega-Mining
This topic in particular emerged during the workshops organized in districts close to the Andes. In this case mappings evidenced the business of multinational corporations (primarily Chinese and Canadian companies) and the ways in which they penetrate districts, are poorly regulated by the State and are tolerated by the political branch. The mappings furthermore revealed the types of exploitation in mountain areas and the separation of minerals through a toxic process using big amounts of water, polluting air and water, damaging landscapes and ecosystems and harming the rights and the health of inhabitants and communities (see map at the end of the article).

"The Map Is Not the Territory"[2]
When we talk about local territories, we don't just mean the physical space in which we find ourselves, but also the social body and rebel subjectivities. Mapmaking is one of the principal tools employed by the dominant powers to appropriate territories for utilitarian purposes. This happens not just as a form of spatial planning but also to set borders that define new occupations and plan strategies of invasion, plunder and appropriation of communal property. As such, the maps commonly circulating in our societies are based on a vision that is imposed onto territories by the dominant powers in order to create hegemonic representations of space. These are functional to the development of the capitalist model, rationally decoding the land, classifying natural resources, demographic characteristics and the type of production that can most effectively transform labor power and resources into capital.

But the map is not the territory. A connection with a particular territory is established through processes of interpretation, feelings and personal experiences. Maps are not the territory because they are unable to account for the subjectivity of the territorial processes, symbolic representations and imaginations inherent to them and the constant mutability and changes they are subject to.
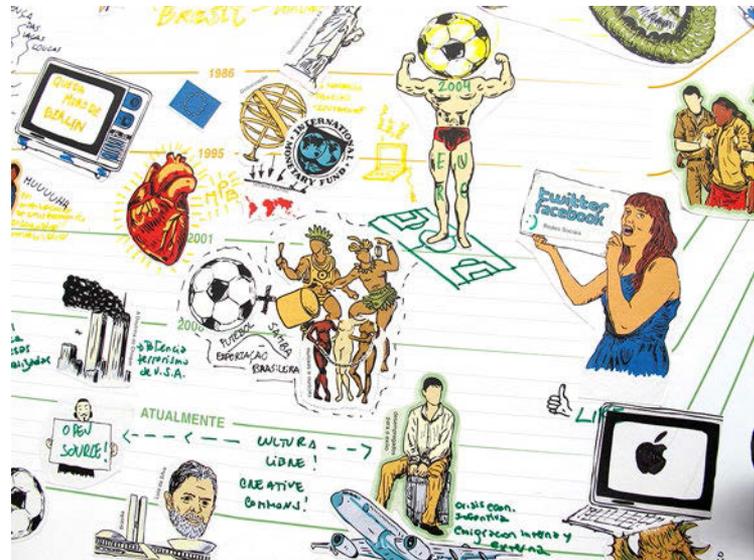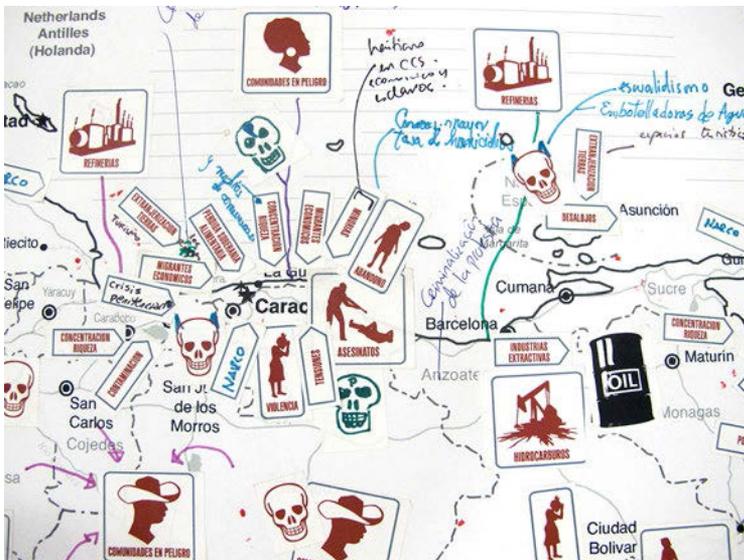
In that Case, Why Work with Maps?

To harness a tool that enables us to collectively create critical narratives and in order to share inputs for the creation of emancipatory practices. In the workshops we use tools that allow us to collectively create complex scenarios, deepen critical approaches and encourage alert and active subjectivities. These are essential if we are to protect common property, fight against processes of colonization and privatization of the public sphere, and establish new worlds.

Maps as Part of an Ever-Moving Collective Process

We shouldn't forget that maps are tools that capture a snapshot of a particular moment, but they cannot completely describe the complex, problematic territorial reality that they are based on. Rather, a map transmits a particular collective idea of a dynamic and ever-changing territory in which the real and symbolic borders are constantly affected by the perceptions and actions of bodies and subjectivities. Maps have to be part of a bigger process, one of many strategies, a means to foster thinking, to socialize knowledge and practices, to boost collective participation, to work with strangers, to swap experiences, to challenge hegemonic spaces, to promote creation and imagination, to probe specific issues, to visualize resistances and to point out power relationships…

Endnotes

1. Parts of this text appeared as "Iconoclasistas. Critical mapping, collaborative practices and open source graphic resources" online (de.scribd.com/document/202343141/Iconoclasistas-Critical-mapping-collaborative-practices-and-open-source-graphic-resources)
    This article and all its illustrations are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

2. This phrase is attributed to Alfred Korzybski (a Polish aristocrat and founder of general semantics), who apparently coined it after his experience as an officer in World War I, when he led a disastrous attack in which his soldiers ended up falling into a pit that was not marked on the map. Gregory Bateson (a North American anthropologist and linguist) completed the phrase by adding "and the name is not the thing named." What they both sought to express was the impossibility of objectifying the significant, emotional dimensions of spaces and linguistic representations.

MEGA-MINING IN THE DRY ANDES

Close to **30 transnational mining companies** have projects in Argentina, the majority of which are Canadian companies (Yamana Gold, Barrick Gold, Xstrata, AngloGold Ashanti y Silver Standard Resources, and Pan American Silver Corp are among the largest).
Between 2003 and 2008 **investments in mining multiplied 10x** and the growth of these projects was 907% .
13 provinces are severely compromised.
300 mines will be up and running in the next 10 years.
7 provinces have prohibited by law exploitation by surface mining: Mendoza, Chubut, Río Negro, San Luis, La Pampa, Tucumán y Córdoba.

Alarm Bells

The realization of a large-scale mining project happens in various stages. Be on the alert!

1. Project
The mining company begins to negotiate with local governments.

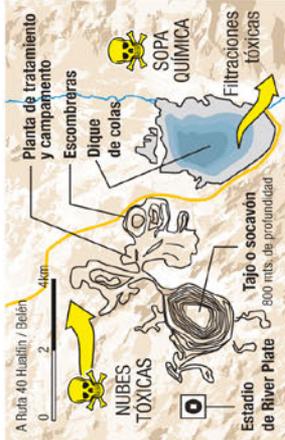**2. Exploration and installation**
They do major drilling and begin to construct the infrastructure.

3. Exploitation and processing
Commercial phase: They break apart mountains and separate minerals from the rock using toxic chemicals.

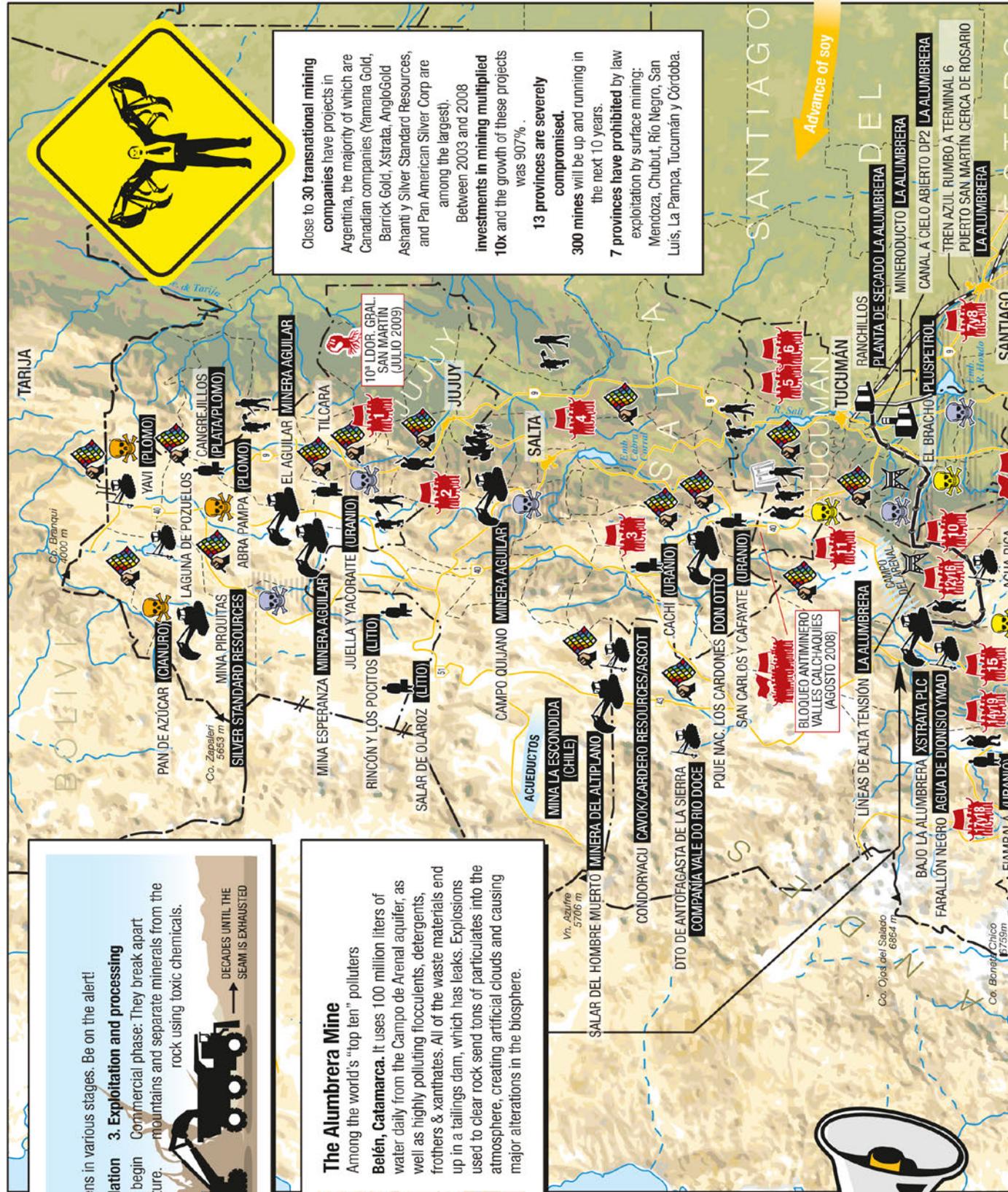1 TO 3 YEARS → DECADES UNTIL THE SEAM IS EXHAUSTED

The Alumbrera Mine

Among the world's "top ten" polluters

Belén, Catamarca. It uses 100 million liters of water daily from the Campo de Arenal aquifer, as well as highly polluting flocculents, detergents, frothers & xanthates. All of the waste materials end up in a tailings dam, which has leaks. Explosions used to clear rock send tons of particulates into the atmosphere, creating artificial clouds and causing major alterations in the biosphere.

A Ruta 40 Hualfín / Belén
0   2   4km
NUBES TÓXICAS
Planta de tratamiento y campamento
Escombreras
Dique de colas
SOPA QUÍMICA
Filtraciones tóxicas
Estadio de River Plate
Tajo o socavón   800 mts. de profundidad

Advance of soy

Map labels

TARIJA
BOLIVIA
SANTIAGO DEL ...
JUJUY
SALTA
TUCUMÁN

10° LDOR. GRAL. SAN MARTÍN (JULIO 2009)

YAVI (PLOMO)
PAN DE AZÚCAR (CIANURO)
CANGREJILLOS (PLATA/PLOMO)
MINA PIRQUITAS SILVER STANDARD RESOURCES
LAGUNA DE POZUELOS
ABRA PAMPA (PLOMO)
EL AGUILAR MINERA AGUILAR
TILCARA
MINERA AGUILAR
JUELLA Y YACORAITE (URANIO)
MINA ESPERANZA MINERA AGUILAR
RINCÓN Y LOS POCITOS (LITIO)
SALAR DE OLAROZ (LITIO)
CAMPO QUIJANO MINERA AGUILAR
ACUEDUCTOS
MINA LA ESCONDIDA (CHILE)
CONDORYACU CAVOK/CARDERO RESOURCES/ASCOT
MINERA DEL ALTIPLANO
CACHI (URANIO)
DON OTTO
SAN CARLOS Y CAFAYATE (URANIO)
PQUE NAC. LOS CARDONES
COMPAÑÍA VALE DO RIO DOCE
DTO DE ANTOFAGASTA DE LA SIERRA
BLOQUEO ANTIMINERO VALLES CALCHAQUÍES (AGOSTO 2008)
LA ALUMBRERA
LÍNEAS DE ALTA TENSIÓN
BAJO LA ALUMBRERA XSTRATA PLC
FARALLÓN NEGRO AGUA DE DIONISIO YMAD
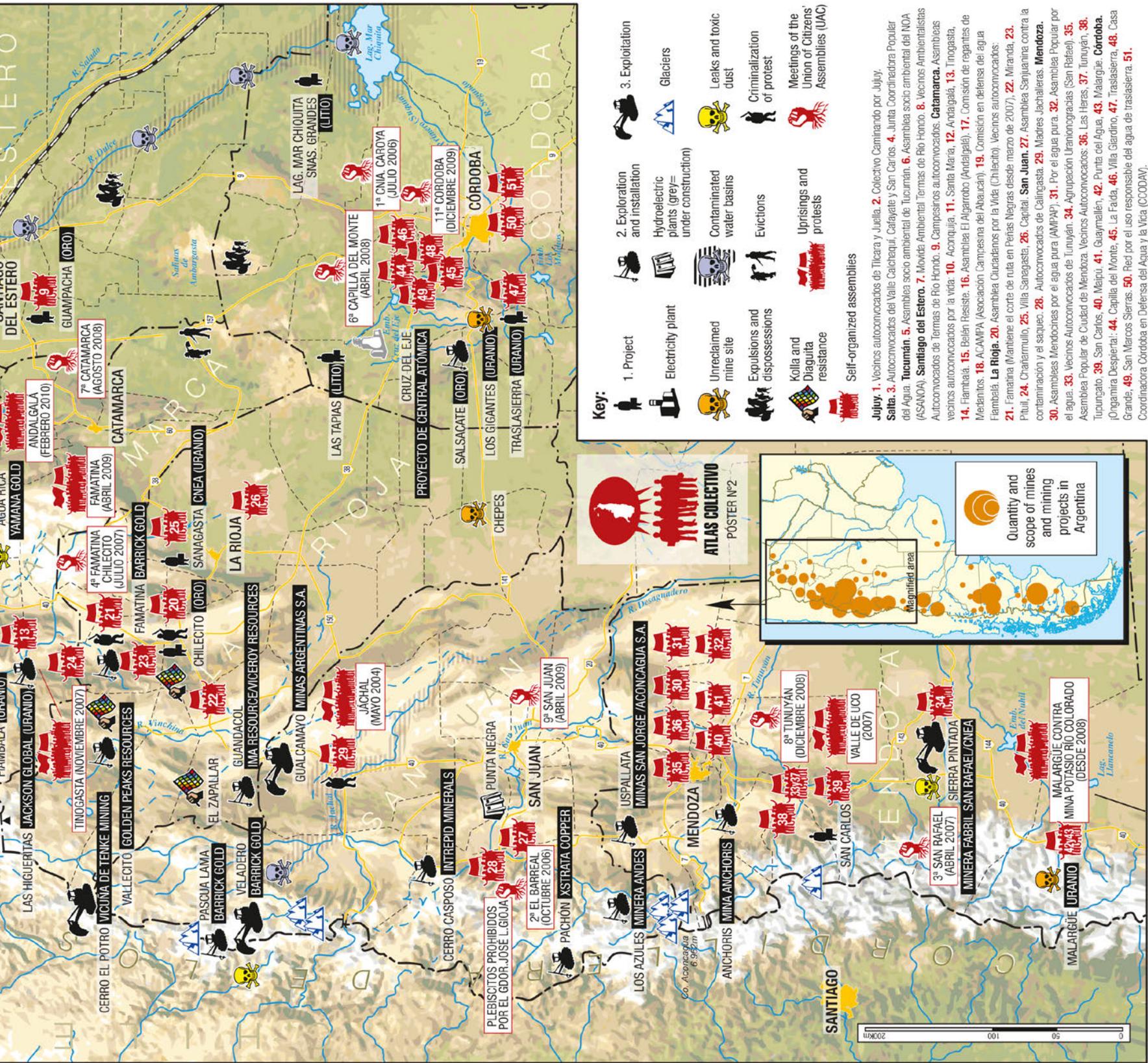SALAR DEL HOMBRE MUERTO
RANCHILLOS
PLANTA DE SECADO LA ALUMBRERA
MINERODUCTO LA ALUMBRERA
CANAL A CIELO ABIERTO DP2 LA ALUMBRERA
TREN AZUL RUMBO A TERMINAL 6 PUERTO SAN MARTÍN CERCA DE ROSARIO LA ALUMBRERA
EL BRACHO PLUSPETROL

Co. Branqui 2000 m
Co. Zapaleri 5653 m
Vn. Azufre 5706 m
Co. Ojos del Salado 6864 m
Co. Bonete Chico 6759 m

ATLAS COLECTIVO
PÓSTER N°2

Quantity and scope of mines and mining projects in Argentina

Magnified area

Key:

1. Project — Electricity plant — Unreclaimed mine site — Expulsions and dispossessions — Kolla and Diaguita resistance — Self-organized assemblies

2. Exploration and installation — Hydroelectric plants (grey= under construction) — Contaminated water basins — Evictions — Uprisings and protests

3. Exploitation — Glaciers — Leaks and toxic dust — Criminalization of protest — Meetings of the Union of Citizens' Assemblies (UAC)

Jujuy. 1. Vecinos autoconvocados de Tilcara y Juella. **2.** Colectivo Caminando por Jujuy. **Salta. 3.** Autoconvocados del Valle Calchequí, Cafayate y San Carlos. **4.** Junta Coordinadora Popular del Agua. **Tucumán. 5.** Asamblea socio ambiental de Tucumán. **6.** Asamblea socio ambiental del NOA (ASANOA). **Santiago del Estero. 7.** Movida Ambiental Termas de Río Hondo. **8.** Vecinos Ambientalistas Autoconvocados de Termas de Río Hondo. **9.** Campesinos autoconvocados. **Catamarca.** Asambleas vecinos autoconvocados por la vida. **10.** Aconquija. **11.** Santa María. **12.** Andalgalá. **13.** Tinogasta. **14.** Fiambalá. **15.** Belén Resiste. **16.** Asamblea El Algarrobo (Andalgalá). **17.** Comisión de regantes de Medanitos. **18.** ACAMPA (Asociación Campesina por la Vida (Chilecito). **19.** Vecinos autoconvocados Fiambalá. **La Rioja. 20.** Asamblea Ciudadanos por la Vida (Chilecito). **21.** Famatina (Mantiene el corte de ruta en Peñas Negras desde marzo de 2007). **22.** Miranda. **23.** Pituil. **24.** Chañarmullo. **25.** Villa Sanagasta. **26.** Capital **San Juan. 27.** Asamblea Sanjuanina contra la contaminación y el saqueo. **28.** Autoconvocados de Calingasta. **29.** Madres Jachalleras. **Mendoza. 30.** Asambleas Mendocinos por el agua pura (AMPAP). **31.** Por el agua pura. **32.** Asamblea Popular por el agua. **33.** Vecinos Autoconvocados de Tunuyán. **34.** Agrupación Uraniongracias (San Rafael). **35.** Asamblea Popular de Ciudad de Mendoza Vecinos Autoconvocados: **36.** Las Heres. **37.** Tunuyán. **38.** Tupungato. **39.** San Carlos. **40.** Maipú. **41.** Guaymallén. **42.** Punta del Agua. **43.** Malargüe. **Córdoba. 44.** ¡Ongamira Despierta!. **45.** La Falda. **46.** Villa Giardino. **47.** Traslasierra. **48.** Casa Grande. **49.** San Marcos Sierras. **50.** Red por el uso responsable del agua de traslasierra. **51.** Coordinadora Córdoba en Defensa del Agua y la Vida (CODAV).

NOT FOR ALL THE GOLD IN THE WORLD!

Surface mining uses excessive amounts of water and energy, destroys territories, and directly affects the health and ways of life of their inhabitants.

Transnational mining companies have enjoyed government subsidies and legal stability for over 30 years; state and local fiscal incentives mean these companies pay minimal withholdings to move valuable metals out of the country, doing so with only a simple vow and without state oversight. They are also allowed to leave 100% of their profits from these transactions outside Argentina. The implementation of this model of looting -- extraction and export -- has been resisted by residents, campesino communities, indigenous Kolla and Diaguita peoples, and concerned neighbors organized in social-environmental assemblies for the defense of life and land. These groups use various strategies of struggle and denunciation when faced with the damages wrought by these mega-mining projects.

Local governments argue that mining will bring "development and work" when the facts demonstrate that they only generate sickness, destruction and death. These governments assist the onslaught of transnational mining companies with repressive politics that criminalize and penalize protest and by supporting the action of quasi-official "special groups" charged with intervening violently against anti-mining marches or blockades with the aim of silencing resistance.