

# **THE EXTRACTIVE FRONTIERS OF THE GREEN NEW DEAL**

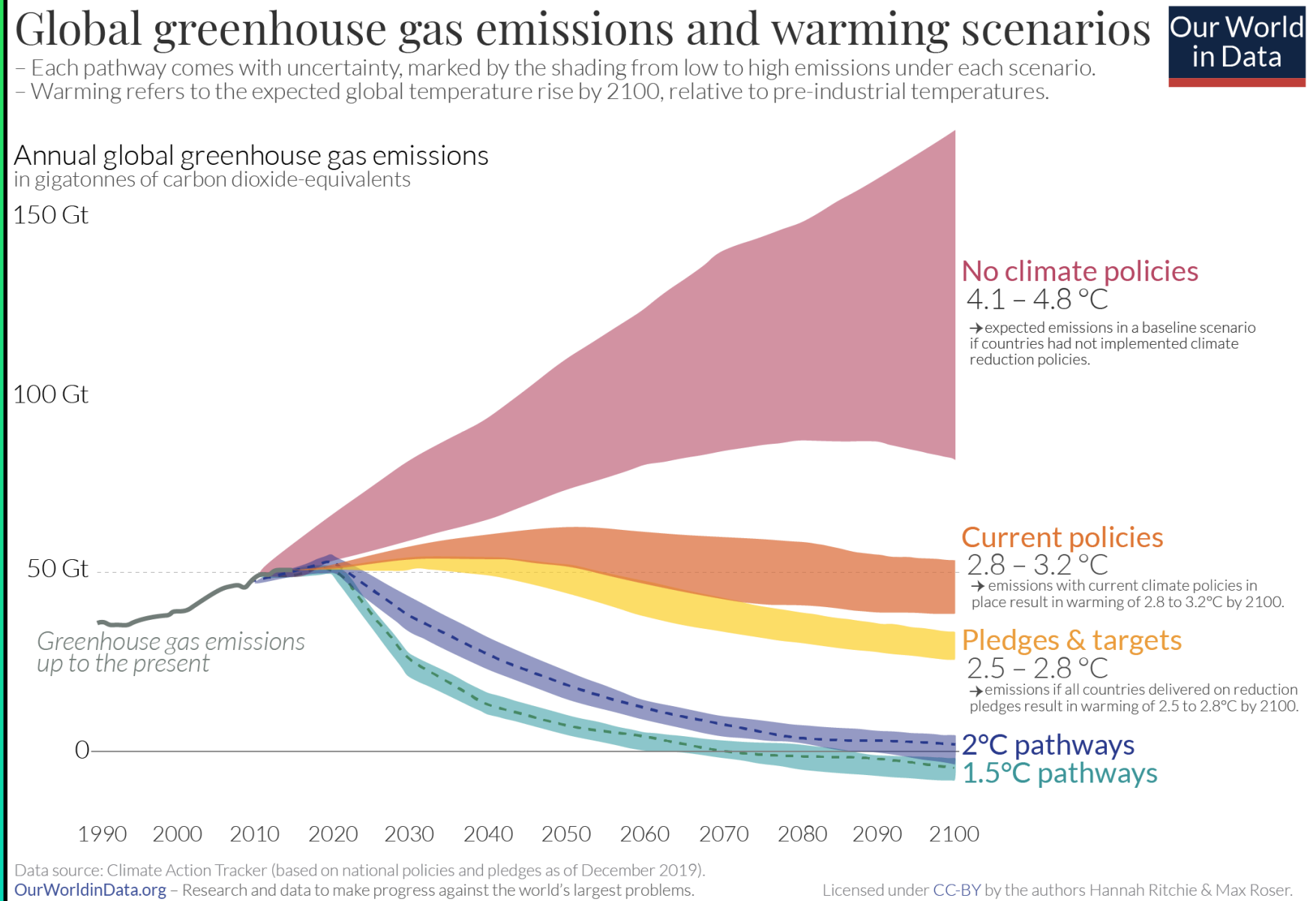
**MAY 5, 2021**

**THEA RIOFRANCOS**

**POLITICAL SCIENTIST, PROVIDENCE COLLEGE**

**GND CAMPAIGN, DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA**

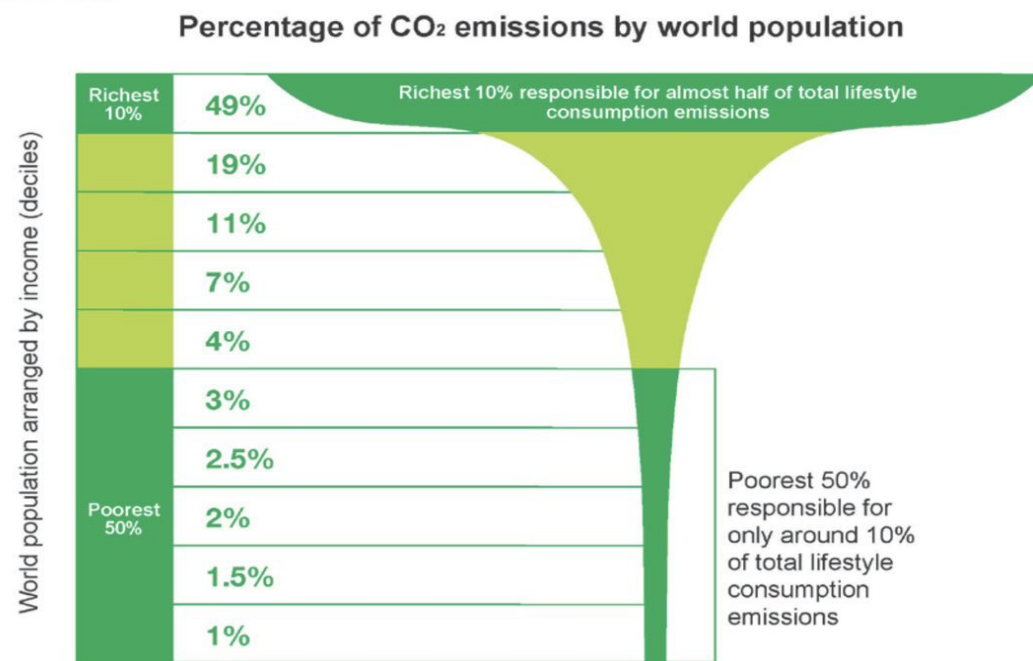
# THE CLIMATE CRISIS



# CLIMATE INJUSTICE

## INCOME INEQUALITY AND EMISSIONS

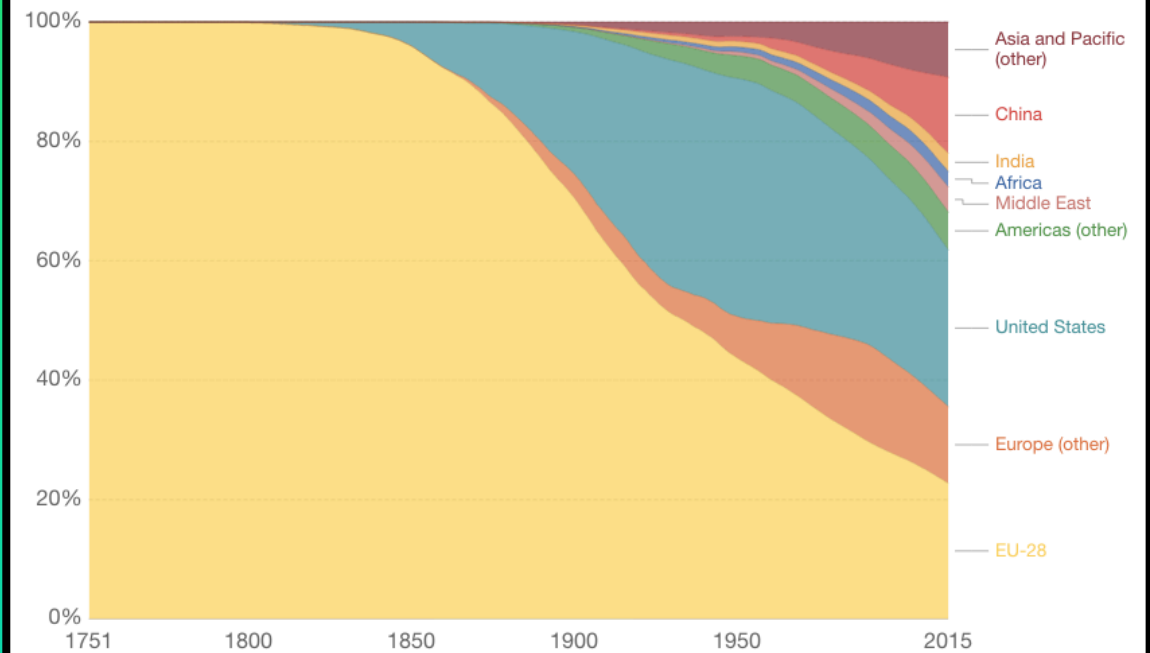
**Figure 1: Global income deciles and associated lifestyle consumption emissions**



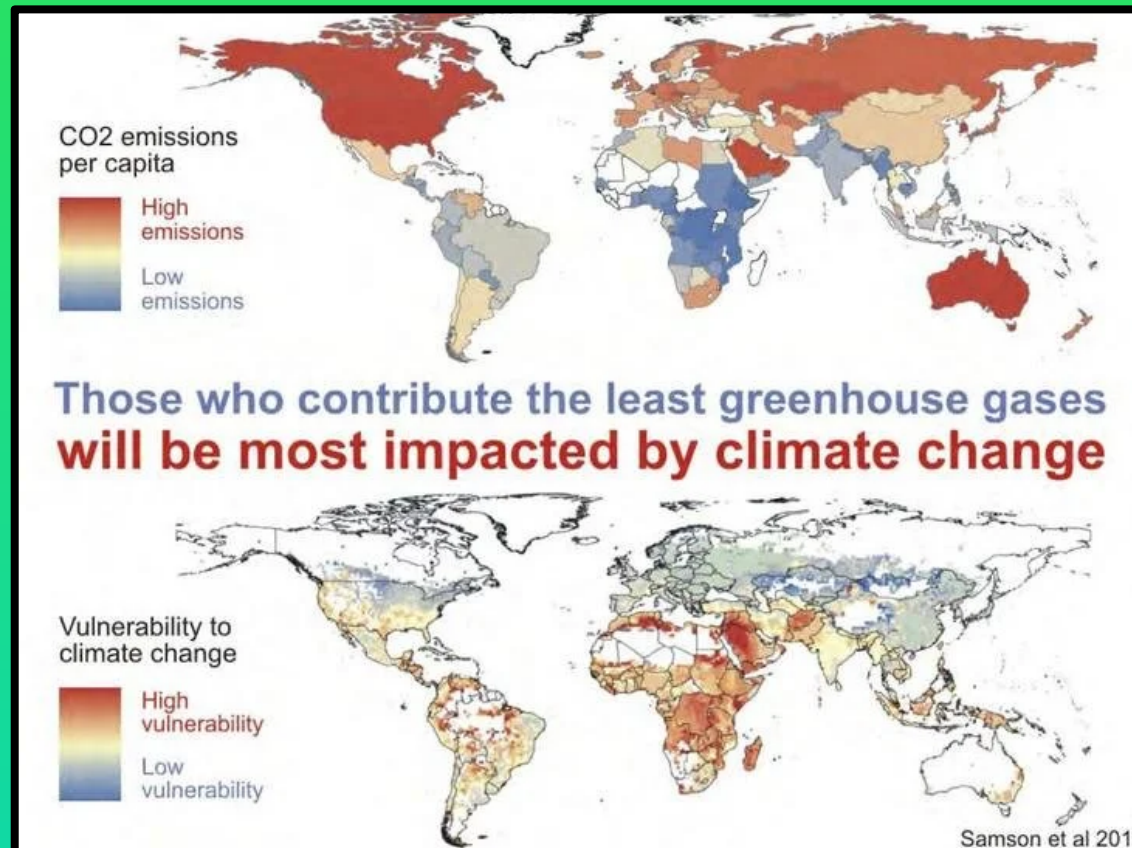
## CUMULATIVE, HISTORIC EMISSIONS

### Cumulative CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by world region

Cumulative carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions by region from the year 1751 onwards. Emissions are based on territorial emissions (production-based) and do not account for emissions embedded in trade.



# CLIMATE INJUSTICE



Climate change vulnerability vs.  
contribution to carbon emissions

= An inverse relationship



# THE GREEN NEW DEAL



Gulf South for a Green New Deal  
(Baton Rouge, Louisiana April 2021)



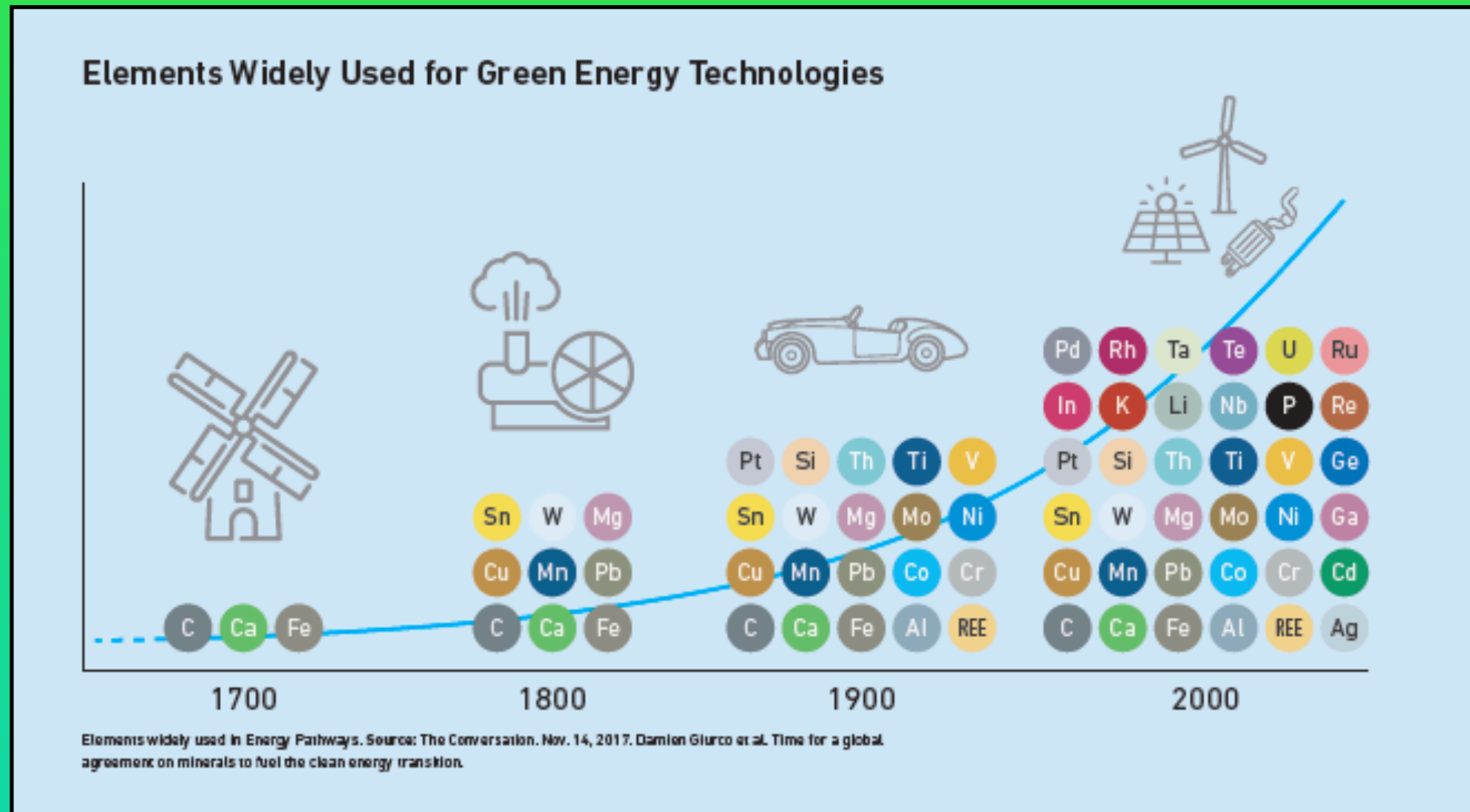
DSA Public Power rally  
(Queens, NY April 2021)



Rep. AOC + Sunrise Movement for a Green New Deal  
(D.C. November 2018)

- Climate crisis + crisis of inequality
- Scale and speed
- Public investment
- Public ownership of energy system
- Just transition for labor & communities
- Green unionized jobs
- Green social housing

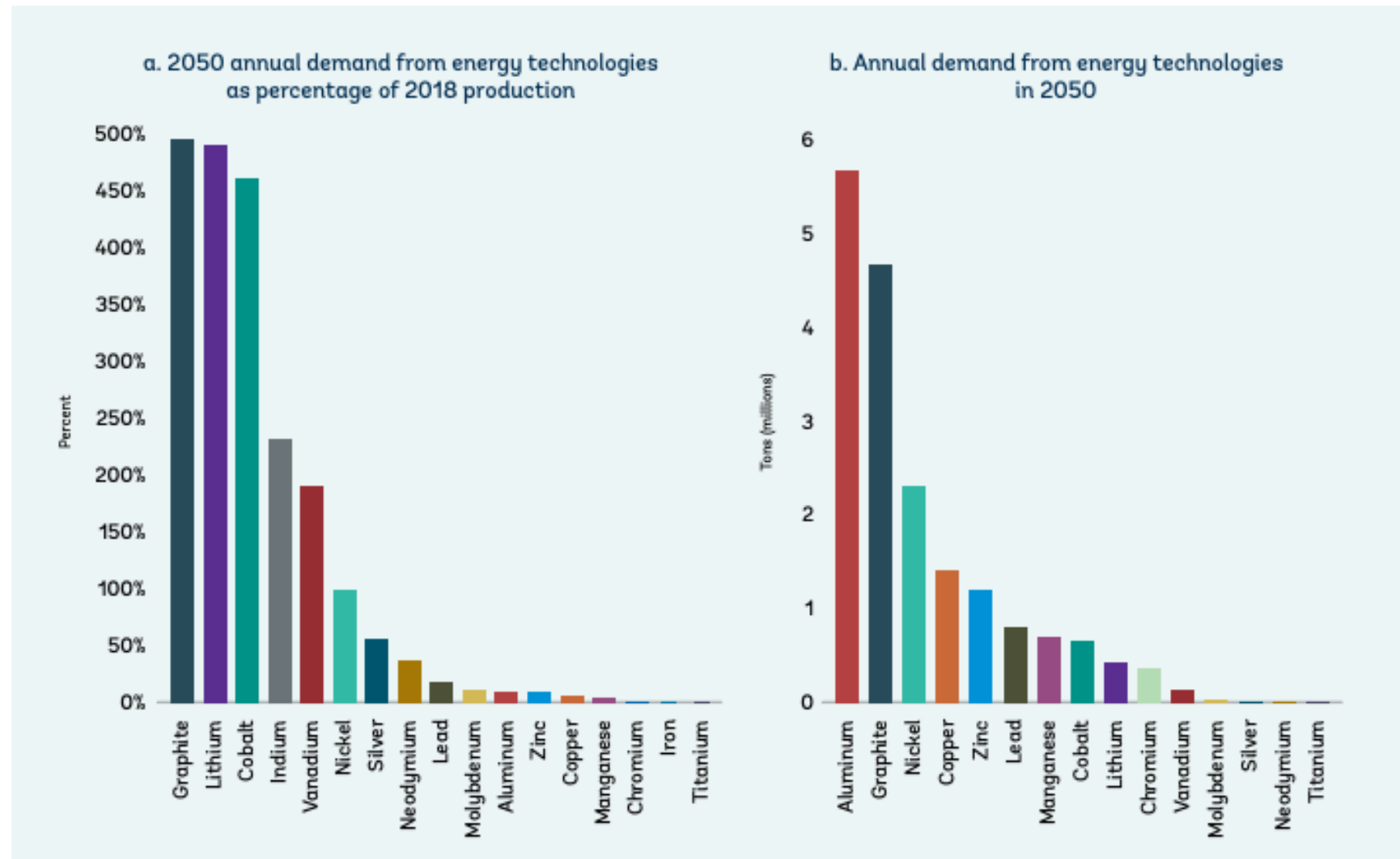
# RENEWABLE ENERGY & MINING



Source: MiningWatch Canada 2019, *Turning Down the Heat: Can We Mine Our Way Out of the Climate Crisis?*

# RENEWABLE ENERGY & MINING

Figure 4.3 Projected Annual Mineral Demand Under 2DS Only from Energy Technologies in 2050, Compared to 2018 Production Levels



Note: 2DS = 2-degree scenario.

Source: World Bank 2020, *Climate Smart Mining: Minerals for Climate Action*

# GREEN EXTRACTIVISM

- Grave impacts on wildlife, freshwater, and marine ecosystems
- Enormous quantities of toxic waste
- Exposes communities to respiratory ailments, territorial dispossession, and violence
- Workers face health and safety risks and minimal protections
- Workers and communities receive paltry economic benefits



# GREEN EXTRACTIVISM

- **Example: Lithium**
  - Needed to decarbonize transportation & for renewable grids
  - Demand increase 500% by 2050
  - Potential supply crunch in next decade

# GREEN EXTRACTIVISM

- **Example: Lithium**
  - Needed to decarbonize transportation & for renewable grids
  - Demand increase 500% by 2050
  - Potential supply crunch in next decade
- **Global North states "race" to secure this "critical mineral"**
  - Risk of fast-tracked projects

# GREEN EXTRACTIVISM

- **Example: Lithium**
  - Needed to decarbonize transportation & for renewable grids
  - Demand increase 500% by 2050
  - Potential supply crunch in next decade
- **Global North states “race” to secure this “critical mineral”**
  - Risk of fast-tracked projects
- **Lithium miners and EV companies promising “sustainable” sourcing**
  - But extractive frontiers are also a liability to “green” branding
  - Community protest, NGO pressure campaigns, investigative journalism



# RESISTING GREEN EXTRACTIVISM



"SQM/ Rockwood Lithium = Death in the Salar de Atacama"

Protest near San Pedro, Chile



"Water is worth more than lithium"

Protest in Jujuy, Argentina



"No to mining/ Yes to Life"

Protest in Lisbon, Portugal



"Protect Thacker Pass/ Lithium Lies"

Site occupation in Thacker Pass, Nevada

# A PLANETARY JUST TRANSITION?

- **Zero-sum tradeoff? Confronting climate crisis versus local environments, livelihoods & self-determination**

# A PLANETARY JUST TRANSITION?

- Zero-sum tradeoff? Confronting climate crisis versus local environments, livelihoods & self-determination
- But: multiple pathways to rapid, globally just decarbonization
  - Privatized auto-domination versus mass transit, cycling, walkability
  - Recycling and materials recovery; ethic of repair
  - Reduce, and make more equitable, total energy consumption
  - Integrate Indigenous rights, environmental and labor protections into trade policy



# A PLANETARY JUST TRANSITION?

- Zero-sum tradeoff? Confronting climate crisis versus local environments, livelihoods & self-determination
- But: multiple pathways to rapid, globally just decarbonization
  - Privatized auto-domination versus mass transit, cycling, walkability
  - Recycling and materials recovery; ethic of repair
  - Reduce, and make more equitable, total energy consumption
  - Integrate Indigenous rights, environmental and labor protections into trade policy
- The energy transition is a *material* transition
- Green New Deal principles apply across borders and scales