

## Greenland – rich or poor?

In these years much is at stake for the Greenlandic society. Greenland obtained self-government in 2009, and the people gives strong support for independence, if Greenland succeeds to realize a self-sustaining economy.

Today Greenland receives a billion grant from the Danish state. Without this block grant the economy will not balance. However, there is potential to provide a self-sustaining economy in the future: Each year foreign companies spend hundreds of millions Danish kroner to make explorations for oil and minerals in the Greenlandic subsoil. All experts agree that the potential for extracting riches are present in the subsoil of Greenland.

In the negotiations for self-government with the Danish government Greenland obtained the ownership of the Greenlandic subsoil. All revenues from oil and minerals will belong to the Greenlandic society. The agreement includes that the grant from the state continually is reduced, when the revenues from the oil and mineral resources begin to be realized.

In Greenland there have been several active mines. In 1990 a mining adventure at

Uummannaq in North Greenland was brought to an end. It was zinc and lead mine.

The world market price for zinc has now given basis for a company to try to reopen the mine. The entrance to the mine is located on a steep rocky slope 5-600 meters above the sea level. The mine is called The Black Angel, because the black coloured rocks near the mine shaft into the mountain shape a figure, which looks like a black angel.

In June 2007, I visited the mine camp. By helicopter, we ascended 600 meters vertically to inspect and photograph the entrance to the mine on the steep rocky slope. Previously, miners and the extracted minerals were transported down to the mine camp by a cable car. If the mine will be activated again, the cable car will be reinstalled.

Actually, I'm impressed with myself. I suffer from vertigo and I was placed in a seat with my feet on a transparent Plexiglass plate. I could see the sea deep beneath me – but after all I was able to take photographs that did not show how much my hands were shaking.

*PS! Two months later the same helicopter crashed in the sea just after take-off from the mine camp.*



*The Black Angel, June 2007*

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