

ON LAGRANGIAN GROUPS

BY

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ABSTRACT. We study the class \mathfrak{L} of Lagrangian groups, that is, of finite groups G possessing a subgroup of index n for each factor n of $|G|$. These groups and their analogues were considered by McLain in [4] and the object of the present work is to extend the results in this article. We study the classes $(G) = \{H \mid G \times H \in \mathfrak{L}\}$ and also the closure of \mathfrak{L} under wreath products. We also consider the two classes \mathfrak{X} and \mathfrak{Y} introduced in [2] and [4] respectively.

0. Introduction. Lagrangian groups, that is, finite groups G possessing for every factor of $|G|$ a subgroup of that index, have been studied by many authors. The interesting survey article [3] contains a useful list of references. It is our purpose here to extend some of the ideas developed by McLain in [4] and to prove a number of new results about such groups and their analogues.

Denoting by \mathfrak{L} the class of Lagrangian groups and by s the operation of subgroup closure, then two basic results are that (a) $s\mathfrak{L}$ is the class \mathfrak{S} of supersoluble groups (proved by Zappa [6] in answer to a question of Ore [5]), and (b) soluble groups are characterised as the direct factors of the elements of \mathfrak{L} (proved by McLain in [4]). Extensions of these results will be discussed in §§1 and 2 respectively, while in §3 we prove a result about the wreath product closure of \mathfrak{L} .

Finally, in §4 we introduce the following two classes of finite groups: \mathfrak{Y} is the class of groups G such that for every subgroup H of G and every integer n dividing $|G:H|$, there is a subgroup K of G with $H \leq K \leq G$ and $|G:K| = n$, while \mathfrak{X} is the class of groups all of whose meet-irreducible subgroups have prime-power index. The class \mathfrak{Y} was introduced in [4], while \mathfrak{X} was introduced in [2], where it is proved that $\mathfrak{X} \subseteq \mathfrak{S}$. We prove here that $s\mathfrak{X} \subseteq \mathfrak{Y} \subseteq \mathfrak{X}$ (so that $s\mathfrak{X} = s\mathfrak{Y}$), but we are unable to find a counterexample to the conjecture $\mathfrak{Y} = \mathfrak{X}$.

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1. *p*-Lagrangian groups. All groups considered in this article will be finite.

Definition. A group G is called Lagrangian if, for every positive integer n dividing $|G|$, G has a subgroup of index n ; we shall denote the class of Lagrangian groups by \mathfrak{L} .

Since each $G \in \mathfrak{L}$ contains a Hall p' -subgroup for each prime p dividing $|G|$, the elements of \mathfrak{L} are all soluble, while on the other hand it is easy to show (using the Sylow tower property) that the class \mathfrak{S} of all supersoluble groups is contained in \mathfrak{L} , both these inclusions being proper.

Proposition 1. For a group G to be Lagrangian, it is necessary and sufficient that G have a subgroup of index n for each prime power n dividing $|G|$.

Proof. The necessity is obvious, while the sufficiency is an immediate consequence of the following elementary result: if H and K are subgroups of G of coprime index, then $|G : H \cap K| = |G : H| |G : K|$.

This result leads in a natural way to the

Definition. A group G is said to be p -Lagrangian (where p is a prime) if, for each nonnegative integer α with $p^\alpha |G|$, G contains a subgroup of index p^α . We denote the class of such groups by \mathfrak{L}_p . Let the prefix s stand for the operation of subgroup closure; we define the classes of strongly Lagrangian and strongly p -Lagrangian groups to be $s\mathfrak{L}$ and the p -soluble members of $s\mathfrak{L}_p$ respectively.

It follows from Proposition 1 that \mathfrak{L} , $s\mathfrak{L}$ are the intersections over all primes p of the classes \mathfrak{L}_p and $s\mathfrak{L}_p$ respectively.

Proposition 2. A group G is strongly p -Lagrangian if and only if G is a p -soluble group possessing a chain of subgroups,

$$(1) \quad G = G_0 > \dots > G_m = H,$$

such that $|G_{i-1} : G_i| = p$, $1 \leq i \leq m$, and $|H|$ is prime to p .

Proof. The necessity of the condition is obvious, while for the sufficiency it is enough to show that the property (1) is subgroup closed within the class of p -soluble groups. So let G be a p -soluble group possessing property (1) and let K be any subgroup of G . By the p -solubility, we can find a Hall p' -subgroup L of K and an element x of G such that $L \leq H^x$. Consider the chain

$$(2) \quad K = K \cap G_0^x \geq \dots \geq K \cap G_m^x = L$$

of subgroups of K , where, if $r_i = |K \cap G_{i-1}^x : K \cap G_i^x|$, $1 \leq i \leq m$, we have $r_i \leq |G_{i-1}^x : G_i^x| = |G_{i-1} : G_i| = p$ for $1 \leq i \leq m$. Since each r_i is a divisor of the p -power $|K : L|$, it follows that r_i is 1 or p , $1 \leq i \leq m$. Thus, deleting the repeated members of (2) leads to a subgroup chain of type (1) for K as required.

Corollary 1. $G \in \mathcal{SL}$ if and only if, for each prime p dividing $|G|$, G has a chain of subgroups of type (1) above.

Proof. This follows at once from the proposition and the fact that the existence of these chains entails the solubility of G .

This corollary provides a characterisation of supersoluble groups, since we already know that $\mathcal{S} = \mathcal{SL}$ (see §0).

Corollary 2. Lagrangian groups of cube-free order are supersoluble.

Consider a chain of subgroups

$$(C) \quad G = G_0 > \dots > G_m = H$$

of the p -soluble group G , where H is a Hall p' -subgroup of G , and write $s(C) = \max\{s_1, \dots, s_m\}$ where $p^{s_i} = |G_{i-1} : G_i|$, $1 \leq i \leq m$. Defining $s_p(G)$ to be the least value of $s(C)$ as (C) ranges over all such chains of subgroups of G , the above corollary simply asserts that if $s_p(G) = 1$ for all primes p dividing $|G|$, then $r_p(G) = 1$ for all p , where $r_p(G)$ is the p -rank of G . It is clear that $s_p(G) \leq r_p(G)$ for all p , however the group G which is the standard wreath product of the symmetric group on three symbols by a cyclic group of order three has $r_3(G) = 3$, but $s_3(G) = 1$, so that $r_p(G) \neq s_p(G)$ in general.

We have the following result for p -soluble groups G satisfying $s_p(G) = 1$.

Proposition 3. Let G be a p -soluble group with $s_p(G) = 1$ and $|G| = p_1^{\alpha_1} \dots p_n^{\alpha_n}$, where $\alpha_1, \dots, \alpha_n$ are all nonzero and $p_1 > p_2 > \dots > p_i = p > \dots > p_m$, say; then G possesses a partial Sylow tower, that is, a chain of subgroups

$$(3) \quad E = G_0 \leq G_1 \leq \dots \leq G_{i-1} \leq G$$

where each member is normal in G , $|G_j : G_{j-1}| = p_j^{\alpha_j}$, $1 \leq j \leq i - 1$, and $|E| = 1$.

Proof. We proceed by induction on $|G|$ and, to avoid triviality, we assume that $i > 1$. By hypothesis, there is a subgroup H of G with $|G : H| = p$, and $s_p(H) = 1$ by Proposition 2. By induction, H has a normal subgroup G_1 , of index $p_1^{\alpha_1}$, which is normal in G by Sylow's theorem (since $p < p_1$). The result now follows by applying the inductive hypothesis to G/G_1 .

2. Direct products. If G is a p -soluble group such that $|G| = p^\alpha m$, where $\alpha > 0$ and $(p, m) = 1$, then it is obvious that the group $G \times Z_{p^{\alpha-1}}$ is p -Lagrangian. For, if H is a Hall p' -subgroup of G and $Z_{p^{\alpha-1}} = Z_{\alpha-1} > \dots > Z_0 = E$ is a composition series for $Z_{p^{\alpha-1}}$, then the set $\{H \times Z_\beta, G \times Z_\beta \mid 0 \leq \beta \leq \alpha - 1\}$ forms a collection of subgroups of all possible p -power indices in $G \times Z_{p^{\alpha-1}}$. This

result characterises soluble groups as the direct factors of Lagrangian groups and leads to the following definition.

Definition. For a p -soluble group G , denote by $n_p(G)$ the least value of the integer n for which $G \times Z_{p^n}$ is p -Lagrangian. (By the above remark, such an integer exists, and is less than α , where $p^\alpha \parallel |G|$.)

Lemma 1. Let G_1 and G_2 be groups such that $G_1 \times G_2$ possesses a subgroup H of index n . Then there exist subgroups $H^1 \leq G_1, H_2 \leq G_2$ such that $H^1 \times H_2$ has index n in $G_1 \times G_2$.

Proof. Let H^i be the projection of H on G_i and H_i be the intersection of H with $G_i, i = 1, 2$. Then $H_i \triangleleft H^i, i = 1, 2$, and $H^1/H_1 \cong H^2/H_2 \cong H/H_1 \times H_2$. Thus

$$|H^1 \times H_2| = |H^1| |H_2| = |H : H_1 \times H_2| |H_1| |H_2| = |H|,$$

as required.

Proposition 4. Let G be a p -soluble group and let $\{n_1, \dots, n_r\}$, where $n_1 < \dots < n_r$, be the set of integers n such that G has a subgroup of index p^n . Then if $p \parallel |G|$,

$$(4) \quad n_p(G) = \max_{1 \leq i \leq r-1} (n_{i+1} - n_i) - 1,$$

while $n_p(G) = 0$ otherwise.

Proof. We assume that $p \parallel |G|$ to avoid triviality. Denoting the right-hand side of (4) by n , we first show that $G \times Z_{p^n}$ is p -Lagrangian. Let H_i be a subgroup of G of index $p^{n_i}, 1 \leq i \leq r$, so that $H_1 \times Z_{p^n}, \dots, H_r \times Z_{p^n}, H_r \times E$ are subgroups of $G \times Z_{p^n}$ of indices

$$(5) \quad p^{n_1}, \dots, p^{n_r}, p^{n_r+1} = p^{n_r+n}$$

respectively. Now let β be any integer such that $p^\beta \parallel |G \times Z_{p^n}|$, so that $n_1 \leq \beta \leq n_{r+1}$, since $n_0 = 0$ and $p^{n_r+1} \parallel |G \times Z_{p^n}|$. If β is one of the integers (5) we are finished, and if not we have $n_i < \beta < n_{i+1}$ for some integer i with $1 \leq i \leq r$. Therefore $\beta - n_i < n_{i+1} - n_i \leq n + 1$ and there is a subgroup K of Z_{p^n} of index $p^{\beta-n_i}$, whence $H_i \times K$ is a subgroup of $G \times Z_{p^n}$ of index p^β , as required.

It remains to prove that for any integer $m < n, G \times Z_{p^m}$ is not p -Lagrangian. Since m is less than the right-hand side of (4), we can find an i , where $1 \leq i \leq r - 1$, such that

$$(6) \quad m + 1 < n_{i+1} - n_i.$$

Assume, for a contradiction, that $G \times Z_{p^m}$ is p -Lagrangian, so that $G \times Z_{p^m}$ has a subgroup of index $p^{n_{i+1}-1}$. By Lemma 1, there are subgroups $H \leq G$, $K \leq Z_{p^m}$, such that $|G : H| |Z_{p^m} : K| = p^{n_{i+1}-1}$. Setting $|Z_{p^m} : K| = p^s$, we have $0 \leq s \leq m$ and $|G : H| = p^{n_{i+1}-1-s}$. But using (6), $n_i < n_{i+1} - 1 - m \leq n_{i+1} - 1 - s < n_{i+1}$, contradicting the definition of the n_i .

The first and second halves of the preceding proof generalise immediately to yield the two parts of the following result.

- Proposition 5.** *Let G be a p -soluble group and H a group with $p^\alpha \parallel |H|$; then*
- (a) *if $\alpha \geq n_p(G)$ and H is p -Lagrangian, then $G \times H$ is p -Lagrangian,*
 - (b) *if $G \times H$ is p -Lagrangian, then $\alpha \geq n_p(G)$.*

For any p -soluble group G , we denote by (G) the class of groups $\{H|G \times H \text{ is } p\text{-Lagrangian}\}$. While basic properties of (G) are given in the above two propositions, it would be interesting to know more about this class. For example, can anything be said about those G such that $G \in (G)$? Also is it possible to characterise those elements H of (G) such that (a) H is not p -Lagrangian, and (b) $p^\alpha \parallel |H|$, where $\alpha = n_p(G)$?

We mention one further result of this type.

Proposition 6. *The following three properties of a p -soluble group G with $p^\alpha \parallel |G|$, $\alpha > 0$, are equivalent:*

- (a) *some direct power of G is p -Lagrangian,*
- (b) *some direct power of G lies in (G) ,*
- (c) *G has subgroups of indices p and $p^{\alpha-1}$.*

Proof. (a) \Rightarrow (b). Obvious.

(b) \Rightarrow (c). Suppose H is a direct power of G lying in (G) . Then $G \times H$ is Lagrangian and so contains a subgroup of index p . It follows from the above lemma that either G or H has a subgroup of index p . In the first case we are done, while in the second, we let $H = H_0 = H_1 \times G$, and deduce again that either G or H_1 has a subgroup of index p . Since $H_s = G$ for some s , we can continue in this way until, after finitely many steps, we obtain a subgroup of index p in G . A similar process yields a subgroup of index $p^{\alpha-1}$ in G .

(c) \Rightarrow (a). For $\alpha \leq 3$, G is already p -Lagrangian. We prove that, for $\alpha \geq 4$, the direct product D of $\alpha - 2$ copies of G is p -Lagrangian.

Let H, K, L be subgroups of G of indices $p^\alpha, p^{\alpha-1}, p$ respectively and let $p^\beta \parallel |D|$ so that $0 \leq \beta \leq \alpha(\alpha - 2)$. By Euclid's theorem $\beta = q(\alpha - 1) + r$, $0 \leq r < \alpha - 1$, and since $\beta < (\alpha - 1)^2$, we have $0 \leq q < \alpha - 1$. If $r + q \leq \alpha - 2$, then $L^{\times r} \times K^{\times q} \times G^{\times s}$, where $s = (\alpha - 2) - (r + q)$ is a subgroup of D of index p^β . If, on the other hand, $\alpha - 2 < r + q < 2\alpha - 3$, then $L^{\times(r-s)} \times K^{\times(\alpha-s)} \times H^{\times s}$ has the

required index, where $s = r + q - (\alpha - 2)$. Thus, D is p -Langrangian as required.

Note that the results of this section may be stated in terms of Lagrangian, rather than just p -Lagrangian groups.

3. **Wreath products.** In this section, we prove a single result.

Proposition 7. *Let G be a Lagrangian group of exponent e and H be a cyclic group of order p such that e divides $(p - 1)$; then the standard wreath product $W = H \wr G$ is a Lagrangian group.*

Proof. (a) Let k be the field of p elements and B the base group of W . Then B is a right kG -module via conjugation by the elements of G and as such is isomorphic to kG itself. Since $W/B \cong G$, and is therefore Lagrangian, W has subgroups of all possible q -power indices whenever q is a prime different from p (since $p \nmid |G|$ and $|B|$ is a p -power). Thus, it will be sufficient to show that for each integer n between 0 and $|G|$, B contains a G -invariant subgroup of order p^n or, equivalently, that the right regular representation of G over k contains kG -submodules of all possible dimensions. Since e divides $(p - 1)$, k is a splitting field for G , and thus the irreducible modules over kG are in one-to-one degree-preserving correspondence with those of $\mathbb{C}G$, where \mathbb{C} denotes the complex numbers. Thus it will be enough to prove the corresponding assertion for each soluble group G over the field \mathbb{C} .

(b) We proceed by induction on the derived length of G , the result being clear for abelian groups. Let $G^{(l)}$ be the last nontrivial term of the derived series of G and let X_1, \dots, X_α be the irreducible $\mathbb{C}G$ -modules obtained by inflation from $G/G^{(l)}$. Denote the remaining irreducibles by Z_1, \dots, Z_β , of degrees z_1, \dots, z_β , respectively. Since $G^{(l)}$ is abelian, we have by Itô's theorem (see [1]) that $z_i \mid t$ where $t = |G/G^{(l)}|$. Now write $\mathbb{C}G = X \oplus Z$, where X involves only the X_i and Z only the Z_j , so that X contains $\mathbb{C}G$ -submodules of all possible dimensions by induction. Now let $Z = Z_\gamma > \dots > Z_0 = (0)$ be a composition series for Z , and let $Z_{\gamma+1} = \mathbb{C}G$. Then for any integer n between 0 and $|G|$, we can find an m such that $\dim Z_m \leq n \leq \dim Z_{m+1}$, where $n - \dim Z_m \leq \dim Z_{m+1}/Z_m \leq t$, by the above, so that X has a submodule, Y say, of dimension $n - \dim Z_m$. It follows that $\mathbb{C}G$ has a submodule, viz. $Y \oplus Z_m$, of dimension n , and this completes the proof.

Note. It would be interesting to have a purely group-theoretical characterisation of the class \mathfrak{A} of groups possessing the property proved for soluble groups in (b) above. \mathfrak{A} properly contains the class of soluble groups, as the group $SL(2, 5)$ has distinct irreducible characters of degrees 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 5, 6. On the other hand, \mathfrak{A} contains no nonabelian simple group, since the only complex character of degree 2 for such a group is trivial and so is not in the regular character.

4. **The classes \mathcal{X} and \mathcal{Y} .** As noted in §0, the class \mathcal{X} of groups all of whose meet-irreducible subgroups have prime-power index consists solely of supersoluble groups. Since every subgroup of a group G is an intersection of meet-irreducible subgroups of G , it is obvious that \mathcal{X} consists precisely of those groups G having the property: for every subgroup H of G there exist subgroups X_1, \dots, X_n of G such that each $|G:X_i|$ is a prime-power and $H = \bigcap_{i=1}^n X_i$. This leads us to define the subclass \mathcal{Y} of \mathcal{X} to consist of those groups G having the same property with the restriction that the $|G:X_i|$ are pairwise coprime. Since $\mathcal{Y} \subseteq \mathcal{S}$, one easily proves the following result (to be found in [4]).

Lemma. *The following two conditions on a group G are equivalent:*

- (a) $G \in \mathcal{Y}$,
- (b) *for any subgroup H of G and any integer n dividing $|G:H|$, there is a subgroup K of G such that $H \leq K$ and $|G:K| = n$.*

It is unknown to us whether or not $\mathcal{X} = \mathcal{Y}$; we give three partial results in this direction.

Proposition 8. $s\mathcal{X} = s\mathcal{Y}$.

Proof. Since $\mathcal{Y} \subseteq \mathcal{X}$ it is sufficient to show that $s\mathcal{X} \subseteq \mathcal{Y}$, by standard properties of the operation s . We assume the result to be false and let G be a minimal counterexample. Let H be a subgroup of G such that H is not the intersection of subgroups of pairwise coprime prime-power indices in G and let $|G:H|$ be minimal with respect to this property. Let p be the largest prime dividing $|G|$ and N a minimal normal subgroup of G of order p (such an N exists by the Sylow tower property, since G is supersoluble by [2]). Now if $N \leq H$, the result follows, since $s\mathcal{X}$ is closed under homomorphic images. Thus we have that $H < NH$ and if $|G:H| = p^\alpha p_1^{\alpha_1} \dots p_r^{\alpha_r}$ (where the p_i are all distinct and the α_i all nonzero), we deduce by the minimality of $|G:H|$ that NH , and hence H , lies in a subgroup X of G with $|G:X| = p_1$. By the minimality of G and the subgroup closure of $s\mathcal{X}$, there is a subgroup Y of X such that $H \leq Y$ and $|X:Y| = p^\alpha$. If $H \neq Y$, we can find a subgroup Z of G such that $|G:Z| = p^\alpha$ and $H < Y \leq Z$, by the minimality of $|G:H|$ again. But NH , and hence H , lies in subgroups X_1, \dots, X_r of G with $|G:X_i| = p_i^{\alpha_i}$, $1 \leq i \leq r$, by the above, whence $H = Z \cap \bigcap_{i=1}^r X_i$, a contradiction. We conclude that $H = Y$, and so $|G:H| = p^\alpha p_1$, where p_1 is a prime less than p . Now let M be a maximal subgroup of X containing H . If $M \neq H$, the minimality of $|G:H|$ entails the existence of a subgroup T of index p in G containing H , which by induction contains a subgroup S containing H with $|T:S| = p^{\alpha-1}$ so that $H = S \cap X$, a contradiction. Thus, $M = H$ and $|G:H| = pp_1$. Since $G \in \mathcal{X}$, $H = \bigcap_{i=1}^s U_i$ where each $|G:U_i|$ is a prime power, and so $H = H \cap X = \bigcap_{i=1}^s (U_i \cap X)$, so for some i , say $i = 1$, $H = U_1 \cap X$. Now $|G:U_1|$ is a prime

power and so is either p or p_1 . If $|G:U_1| = p_1$, H has p cosets in U_1 , implying that X has p cosets in $XU_1 \subseteq G$. This leads to the contradiction $p \leq p_1$, and so $|G:U_1| = p$, which final contradiction proves the proposition.

Proposition 9. *Let $G \in \mathcal{X}$ be a group of fourth-power-free order, then $G \in \mathcal{Y}$.*

Proof. Assume that the result is false and let G be a minimal counterexample. As in the preceding proof, let H be a subgroup of minimal index such that H is not the intersection of subgroups of pairwise coprime prime-power indices in G . Let p be the largest prime dividing $|G|$, and N a minimal normal subgroup of G of order p . If $N \leq H$, a contradiction follows by induction, while if $N \not\leq H$, by the minimality of $|G:H|$, NH , and hence H lies in a subgroup X_q of G with $|G:X_q| = q^\alpha$, where the prime power $q^\alpha \parallel |G:H|$, for all $q \neq p$. Thus it suffices to show that H is contained as a subgroup of p' -index in some subgroup X of G with $|G:X|$ a p -power. Since $N \not\leq H$, we know that $p \mid |G:H|$, and by Hall's theorem, we have $p \mid |H|$. Thus, by hypothesis, the p -part of $|G:H|$ is either p or p^2 . Now let $H = \bigcap_{i=1}^n X_i$, with each $|G:X_i|$ a prime power. We claim that p divides $|G:X_i|$ for some i . If not, we use the supersolubility of G to construct chains $X_i = X_{i,0} < X_{i,1} < \dots < X_{i,\alpha_i} = G$ where each $|X_{i,j}:X_{i,j-1}|$ is a prime smaller than p . These chains intersect to yield a chain from H up to G with the index of each member in the next less than p , which is impossible. Hence we can assume that $|G:X_1|$, say, is a p -power. Since the representation $H = \bigcap_{i=1}^n X_i$ can be assumed irredundant, $H < \bigcap_{i=2}^n X_i < G$, the last inclusion being proper since otherwise $G = X_1$. By the minimality of $|G:H|$, we can write $\bigcap_{i=2}^n X_i = \bigcap_{j=1}^m Y_j$ with the $|G:Y_j|$ pairwise coprime prime-powers. If each $|G:Y_j|$ is prime to p , the representation $H = X_1 \cap \bigcap_{j=1}^m Y_j$ yields a contradiction. Otherwise, we can assume that p divides $|G:Y_1|$, say. By the above argument with chains of subgroups, we see that $|X_1 \cap Y_1:H|$ is prime to p , and if $H < X_1 \cap Y_1$ we have a contradiction, again using the minimality of $|G:H|$. Thus, $H = X_1 \cap Y_1$, and this representation is irredundant. Since the p -part of $|G:H|$ is either p or p^2 , we must have $|G:X_1| = p = |G:Y_1|$, so that $|G:H| \leq p^2$. But if the p -part of $|G:H|$ is p , X_1 is the required subgroup X of G , while otherwise there is a positive integer k such that $kp^2 = |G:H| \leq p^2$, proving that $|G:H| = p^2$, a contradiction. Thus the proposition is proved.

It follows at once from this that, if G is a minimal counterexample to the assertion $\mathcal{X} \subseteq \mathcal{Y}$, then $|G|$ is divisible by p^4 , where p is the largest prime dividing $|G|$.

Proposition 10. *Let $G \in \mathcal{X}$, p be the largest prime dividing $|G|$, P be a Sylow p -subgroup of G and g be an arbitrary element of G . Then there exists an integer n such that, for each $x \in P$, $x^g \equiv x^n \pmod{\Phi(P)}$.*

Proof. Since $\mathcal{X} = q\mathcal{X}$ and $P \triangleleft G$, we can assume that $\Phi(P) = E$. We claim that for each $x \in P$, $\langle x \rangle \triangleleft G$. Suppose this to be false, and choose $g \in G$ such that $x^g \notin \langle x \rangle$. Writing $g = g_1 g_2$, with $g_2 \in P$, and g_1 a p' -element of G , we have that $x^{g_1} \notin \langle x \rangle$. Now write

$$\langle x \rangle = \bigcap_{i=1}^r X_i \cap \bigcap_{j=1}^s Y_j$$

where each $|G : X_i|$ is a p -power and $|G : Y_j|$ is a prime power coprime to p . Since $P \triangleleft G$, $P \leq Y_j$ for all j , and we have

$$\langle x \rangle = \langle x \rangle \cap P = \bigcap_{i=1}^r X_i \cap \bigcap_{j=1}^s Y_j \cap P = \left(\bigcap_{i=1}^r X_i \right) \cap P.$$

Now for any i , X_i contains a Hall p' -subgroup of G and so, by Hall's theorem, there is an $a_i \in P$ such that $g_1^{a_i} \in X_i$. We let $g_1^{a_i} = g_i$ and obtain, since P is a normal abelian subgroup of G , that $x^{g_i} = x^{g_1^{a_i}} = x^{g_1} \notin \langle x \rangle$, but x^{g_1} is a member of X_i for all i and also lies in P . Hence, $x^{g_1} \in \left(\bigcap_{i=1}^r X_i \right) \cap P = \langle x \rangle$, a contradiction.

Thus, for each $x \in P$, $g \in G$, we have $x^g = x^i$ for some integer i ; it remains to prove that i is independent of x . Let $x, y \in P \setminus E$ and $g \in G$, and let $x^g = x^i, y^g = y^j$ with $0 \leq i, j \leq p - 1$. If $y \in \langle x \rangle$, it follows at once that $i = j$, while if not, let $(xy)^g = (xy)^k, 0 \leq k \leq p - 1$, so that $x^i y^j = x^k y^k$, and it now follows from the linear independence of x and y that $i = k$ and $j = k$, as required.

Corollary 1. *Let $G \in \mathcal{X}$, p be the largest prime dividing $|G|$ and P a Sylow p -subgroup of G . Then $G/PC_G(P)$ is cyclic of order dividing $p - 1$.*

Proof. Consider the composite homomorphism

$$G \xrightarrow{\lambda} \text{Aut}(P) \xrightarrow{\mu} \text{Aut}(P/\Phi(P)),$$

where λ is induced by conjugation and μ is the usual canonical homomorphism. By the proposition, $\text{Im } \lambda\mu$ lies in the centre of $\text{Aut}(P/\Phi(P))$ (which is cyclic of order $(p - 1)$) and since μ is one-to-one on the p' -elements of $\text{Aut}(P)$, it follows that the Hall p' -subgroup of $\text{Im } \lambda$ is cyclic of order dividing $(p - 1)$. Since $\text{Im } \lambda \cong G/C_G(P)$, the corollary is proved.

Corollary 2. *Let G be an element of minimal order in $\mathcal{X} \setminus \mathcal{Y}$; then, with the above notation, G/P is cyclic of order dividing $(p - 1)$.*

Proof. Let H be a subgroup of minimal index in G such that H is not the intersection of subgroups of pairwise coprime indices in G . Then H is core-free, since $\mathcal{X} = q\mathcal{X}$. Since $|HO_p(G) : H|$ and $|HO_{p'}(G) : H|$ are coprime, it follows from the minimality of $|G : H|$ that at least one of $O_p(G), O_{p'}(G)$ lies in H , and

so we deduce that $O_{p'}(G) = E$. But $PC_G(P) = P \times O_{p'}(G)$, and the result follows from Corollary 1.

Addendum. The first author has constructed an example of a group of order $2 \cdot 3^6$ which is in \mathcal{X} but not in \mathcal{Y} .

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