

**Lemma 1** If  $p$  is a prime number, then, for all integers  $n \geq 2$ ,  $p^n \nmid p!$ .

*Proof.*

Suppose  $p^2 \mid p!$ . Then  $p \mid (p-1)!$ . By Wilson's theorem,  $p \mid ((p-1)! + 1)$ . Thus  $p \mid ((p-1)! + 1 - (p-1)!)$ . To conclude  $p \mid 1$ , a contradiction since  $p > 1$ . Now let  $n > 2$ . Suppose  $p^n \mid p!$ . Since  $p^2 \mid p^n$  and  $p^n \mid p!$ ,  $p^2 \mid p!$  which is a contradiction.

**Lemma 2** If  $G$  is a finite group and  $H \neq G$  is a subgroup of  $G$  such that  $|G| \nmid i(H)!$ , then  $H$  must contain a nontrivial normal subgroup of  $G$ .

*Proof.*

This is Lemma 2.9.1 in [1].

**Theorem 1** Any subgroup of order  $p^{n-1}$  in a group  $G$  of order  $p^n$ ,  $p$  a prime number, is normal in  $G$ .

*Proof.*

The proof is by induction on  $n$ . Suppose the result is true for  $n-1$ . To show that it then must follow for  $n$ . Let  $G$  be a group of order  $p^n$  and  $H$  be its subgroup of order  $p^{n-1}$ . Since  $|G| \nmid i(H)!$ , that is  $p^n \nmid p!$  by Lemma 1,  $H$  must contain a normal subgroup  $N \neq (e)$  of  $G$ . Thus  $|N| = p^k$  such that  $1 \leq k \leq n-1$ . Since  $p$  divides  $|N|$ , by Cauchy's theorem,  $N$  has an element  $b \neq e$  of order  $p$ . Let  $B$  be the subgroup of  $G$  generated by  $b$ . So  $|B| = p$ . Since  $b \in N$ ,  $B$  must be normal in  $G$ . Since  $G/B$  is a group of order  $p^{n-1}$  and  $H/B$  is its subgroup of order  $p^{(n-1)-1}$ , by the induction hypothesis  $H/B$  is normal in  $G/B$ . To conclude  $H$  is normal in  $G$ .

## References

- [1] I. N. Herstein, *Topics in Algebra*, John Wiley & Sons, New York, 1975.