

## ON FREE PRODUCTS OF FINITELY GENERATED ABELIAN GROUPS<sup>(1)</sup>

BY

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**ABSTRACT.** Let the group  $G$  be a free product of a finite number of finitely generated abelian groups. Let  $G'$  be its commutator subgroup. It is proven here that the "quasi- $G$ -simple" commutators, defined below, are free generators of  $G'$ .

**I. Introduction.** In this paper, we will investigate the commutator subgroup,  $G'$ , of a group,  $G$ , which is the free product:

$$(1.1) \quad G = G(1) * G(2) * \cdots * G(s)$$

where each  $G(i)$  for  $i = 1, 2, \dots, s$  is a finitely generated abelian group. We observe that the Kurosh subgroup theorem [5, p. 243] implies that  $G'$  is a free group. Using a Kurosh rewriting process in the manner of [1], we obtain a set of free generators for  $G'$ . Then by means of the commutator calculus and a well-known theorem on free groups, we produce in Theorem 2.1 a more useful set of free generators of  $G'$ , the "quasi- $G$ -simple" commutators.

The results obtained here are generalizations of those in [1], [2], [3], [6], [9]. In [3], K. W. Gruenberg found a set of free generators for the commutator subgroup of a group which is the free product of finitely many cyclic groups. We note that the "quasi- $G$ -simple" commutators become identical with the generators of Theorem 5.2 [3] in the special case where  $G$  is a free product of cyclic groups. In [2], S. Bachmuth studied the commutator subgroup of a free metabelian group with finitely many free generators. R. Prener, in [6], found free generators for the commutator subgroup of a group which is the free product of direct products of cyclic groups of order two. In [9], H. V. Waldinger generalizes this from two to

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any prime order by adapting the methods of [2]. Moreover, the "quasi- $G$ -simple" commutators reduce to the " $G$ -simple basic commutators" of Theorem 2 [9] in the special case where each  $G(i)$  is the direct product of cyclic groups of prime order. Finally, a set of free generators for the commutator subgroup of a group which is the free product of finite abelian groups is found in [1] by means of the Kurosh rewriting process. The set,  $\Sigma$ , of free generators of  $G'$  found in Lemma 3.3 of this paper reduces to the corresponding set found in [1] if the free factors of  $G$  are finite abelian groups.

To proceed we shall employ the terminology and notation of §§2 and 3 of [8]. [8] shall be referred to as I. Furthermore, the numbering of any theorem, definition, or lemma in I will be denoted by a.b-I; e.g., Lemma 2.1-I shall mean Lemma 2.1 of I.

II. Statement of the main result. We first require two definitions.

Definition 2.1. (For a comparison see Definition 4.1-I.) A basic commutator (refer to Definition 2.1-I),  $c$ , is called  $G$ -simple if it satisfies four conditions:

- (i) Either  $c$  is among the generators  $c_1, c_2, \dots, c_r$  described in §III below, or  $c = (\dots(c_{j_1}, c_{j_2}), \dots, c_{j_\omega})$  such that  $c_r \geq c_{j_1} > c_{j_2} \geq c_1$  and  $c_{j_2} \leq c_{j_3} \leq \dots \leq c_{j_\omega} \leq c_r$ .
- (ii) If  $D(c) > 1$ , then  $(c_{j_1}, c_{j_2}) \neq 1$  in  $G$ .
- (iii) If  $c_i$  occurs  $\sigma$ -times in  $\langle c \rangle$ , then  $1 \leq \sigma < O(c_i)$ . ( $O(c_i)$  means the order of  $c_i$ .)
- (iv) If  $D(c) > 2$ , and  $(c_{j_1}, c_{j_r}) = 1$  in  $G$  for  $2 < r \leq \omega$  then  $c_{j_r} \leq c_{j_1}$ .

Definition 2.2. Let  $t > 1$ . A commutator

$$e = (\dots(c_{i_1}^{\epsilon_1}, c_{i_2}^{\epsilon_2}), \dots, c_{i_t}^{\epsilon_t})$$

is a quasi- $G$ -simple commutator provided

- (a)  $c = (\dots(c_{i_1}, c_{i_2}), \dots, c_{i_t})$  is  $G$ -simple,
- (b) the  $\epsilon_j = \pm 1$  for  $j = 1, 2, \dots, t$ ,
- (c)  $\epsilon_j = -1$  only if  $O(c_{i_j}) = \infty$ ,
- (d) if  $\epsilon_j = -1$ , then  $\epsilon_k = -1$  for all  $c_{i_k} = c_{i_j}$ .

Theorem 2.1. The quasi- $G$ -simple commutators are free generators of  $G'$ .

III. A set of free generators of  $G'$ . It is well known that any  $G(i)$  in (1.1) is the direct product of cyclic groups of either prime power or infinite order. (See [4].) Thus we let  $G$  have generators  $c_1, c_2, \dots, c_r$  with prime power or infinite order. Let  $j = 1, 2, \dots, r$ . Let  $\alpha_j = O(c_j)$  if  $O(c_j)$  is finite but let  $\alpha_j = 0$  if  $O(c_j) = \infty$ .

To arrive at our main result, Theorem 2.1, we first obtain a set,  $\Sigma$ , of free generators of  $G'$  in Lemma 3.3. This set,  $\Sigma$ , is obtained by applying the Kurosh rewriting process [5, §4.3] to the commutator subgroup,  $G'$ , of  $G$ . This procedure starts out by dividing the generators of  $G$  into disjoint classes.

It will be understood that the generators  $c_1, c_2, \dots, c_r$  are ordered by their subscripts so that for  $1 \leq i < j \leq s$  a generator of  $G(i)$  always precedes a generator of  $G(j)$ . Clearly there exist integers

$$(3.1) \quad 0 = n_0 < n_1 < n_2 < \dots < n_s = r$$

so that

$$(3.2) \quad c_{n_{i-1}+1}, c_{n_{i-1}+2}, \dots, c_{n_i}$$

generate  $G(i)$  for  $i = 1, 2, \dots, s$ . We shall say that the generators given in (3.2) constitute the class  $\beta_i$  or are generators of  $\beta_i$ -type.

Having defined the classes  $\beta_i$ , we must next introduce coset representatives of  $\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_s$ , and neutral types. To construct these representatives, we require Criterion 1 below which involves quantities  $\sigma(k, w)$ . Any nonidentity element,  $w$ , of  $G$  evidently has the form

$$w = \prod_{i=1}^r c_{j_i}^{\epsilon_i}$$

where the  $\epsilon_i$  are integers and are such that (i)  $0 < \epsilon_i < \alpha_{j_i}$  if  $\alpha_{j_i} \neq 0$ , (ii) at least one among  $\epsilon_1, \epsilon_2, \dots, \epsilon_r \neq 0$ . Let  $k = 1, 2, \dots, r$ . For  $w \neq 1$ , we then take

$$\sigma(k, w) = \begin{cases} \sum_{j_i=k} \epsilon_i & \text{if } k \in K = \{j_1, j_2, \dots, j_r\}, \\ 0 & \text{if } k \notin K. \end{cases}$$

For  $w = 1$ , we let every  $\sigma(k, w) = 0$ .

As an immediate consequence of the well-known fact [5, p. 79] that a word  $w$  in the free group on  $r$  generators is in the commutator subgroup if and only if every generator occurs in  $w$  with "exponent sum" zero, we now easily obtain our criterion.

**Criterion 1.**  $w \in G'$  if and only if the  $r$  quantities  $\sigma(k, w)$  are either (i) divisible by  $\alpha_k$  if  $\alpha_k \neq 0$ , or (ii)  $= 0$  if  $\alpha_k = 0$ .

Our criterion clearly implies

**Lemma 3.1.** *The words  $w_1$  and  $w_2$  are in the same coset of  $G'$  if and only if each of the  $r$  differences  $\sigma(k, w_1) - \sigma(k, w_2)$  is either divisible by  $\alpha_k$  if  $\alpha_k \neq 0$  or  $= 0$  if  $\alpha_k = 0$ .*

Making use of this lemma, we can now obtain many systems of coset representatives. In order to arrive at the desired set of free generators of  $G'$ , however, we shall choose the coset representatives in the special manner given below.

Using a scheme analogous to that of [1], we proceed as follows:

Let the  $\beta_i$ -representatives ( $1 \leq i \leq s$ ) be given by

$$(3.3) \quad K_i(\epsilon_1, \dots, \epsilon_r) = \begin{cases} \prod_{h=0}^{s-1} \left[ \prod_{j=n_{s-h-1}}^{n_{s-h}} c_j^{\epsilon_j} \right] & \text{for } i = 1 \\ \left[ \prod_{h=0, h \neq s-i}^{s-1} \left[ \prod_{j=n_{s-h-1}}^{n_{s-h}} c_j^{\epsilon_j} \right] \right] \left[ \prod_{j=n_{i-1}+1}^{n_i} c_j^{\epsilon_j} \right] & \text{for } i > 1 \end{cases}$$

where

$$(3.4) \quad 0 \leq \epsilon_j < \alpha_j \quad \text{if } \alpha_j \neq 0.$$

Let the representatives of neutral and  $\beta_1$ -types be identical.

For fixed  $i$ , it is obvious by Lemma 3.1 that the group elements  $K_i(\epsilon_1, \dots, \epsilon_r)$  are in distinct cosets of  $G'$ . According to [1] and [5, p. 239], this collection of coset representatives forms a regular extended Schreier system.

Having verified that our representative system is an extended Schreier system (we do not need the fact that it is regular), we immediately find a set of free generators of  $G'$  by making use of

**Lemma 3.2.** (See Corollary 4.8 of [5].) *Let  $G$  be a free product of the form (1.1). Let  $H$  be a subgroup of  $G$ . For  $w \in G$  let  ${}^*w$  and  $\beta_i(w)$  be the representatives of  $w$  of neutral and  $\beta_i$ -type respectively. Let  $t_N = N({}^*N)^{-1}$  where  $N$  is a right coset representative of any  $\beta_i$ -type. Let  $s_{N,x} = Nx(\beta_i(Nx))^{-1}$  where  $N$  is a right coset representative and  $x$  is a generator both of the same  $\beta_i$ -type. Suppose the coset representatives of  $\beta_1$ -,  $\beta_2$ -,  $\dots$ ,  $\beta_s$ -, and neutral types constitute an extended Schreier system. Then  $H$  is the free product  $H = H_1 * H_2$  where  $H_1$  has as free generators those  $t_N$  which are  $\neq 1$  and  $H_2$  is generated by elements  $s_{N,x}$ .*

Let us apply Lemma 3.2 to our case. (Here  $G'$  is normal and we do not distinguish between right and left cosets.) If  $x$  is a generator and  $N = K_i(\epsilon_1, \epsilon_2, \dots, \epsilon_r)$  is a coset representative both of  $\beta_i$ -type, then  $Nx$  is evidently again a coset representative of the form (3.3) since the generators of  $G(i)$  commute and have either prime power or infinite order. Thus Lemma 3.2 yields

**Lemma 3.3.** *The following set  $\Sigma \subseteq G'$  is a set of free generators for  $G'$ .  $\Sigma$  consists of all elements of the form*

$$(3.5) \quad t_i(\epsilon_1, \dots, \epsilon_r) = [K_i(\epsilon_1, \dots, \epsilon_r)][K_1(\epsilon_1, \dots, \epsilon_r)]^{-1}$$

which are such that (i)  $i \neq 1$ , (ii) at least one  $\epsilon_j \neq 0$  for  $(n_{i-1} + 1) \leq j \leq n_i$ , and finally (iii) at least one  $\epsilon_j \neq 0$  for  $1 \leq j \leq n_{i-1}$ .

Next by means of the commutator calculus and a well-known theorem on free groups, we proceed to show our main result, Theorem 2.1, which we restate here.

**Theorem 2.1.** *The quasi-G-simple commutators are free generators of the same group as  $\Sigma$ . In other words, the quasi-G-simple commutators generate  $G$  freely.*

To prove this theorem we shall first set up a one-to-one correspondence between the elements of the set  $\Sigma$  (3.5) and the quasi-G-simple commutators. For this purpose we need to introduce the auxiliary quantities below.

$$(3.6) \quad \text{Let } \eta_j = \begin{cases} 0 & \text{if } \epsilon_j = 0 \\ \alpha_j - \epsilon_j & \text{if } \epsilon_j \neq 0. \end{cases}$$

$$(3.7) \quad \text{Let } E = E(\epsilon_1, \epsilon_2, \dots, \epsilon_r) = \sum_{j=1}^r |\eta_j|.$$

Let  $\sigma = \sigma(i; \epsilon_1, \epsilon_2, \dots, \epsilon_r)$  be the largest integer among  $n_{i-1} + 1, n_{i-1} + 2, \dots, n_i$  so that  $\epsilon_\sigma \neq 0$ . ( $\sigma$  can always be found uniquely by condition (ii) on the elements of  $\Sigma$ .)

Finally let  $\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_E$  be that sequence of integers such that

$$(3.8) \quad \text{(i) } \lambda_1 = \sigma(i; \epsilon_1, \epsilon_2, \dots, \epsilon_r);$$

$$(3.9) \quad \text{(ii) } \lambda_2 \leq \lambda_3 \leq \dots \leq \lambda_E, \text{ when } E > 2;$$

$$(3.10) \quad \text{(iii) any } j \text{ among } 1, 2, \dots, r \text{ occurs } |\eta_j| \text{ times among } \lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_E.$$

We have now developed the machinery which we require for our 1-1 correspondence. We define

$$(3.11) \quad c(i; \epsilon_1, \epsilon_2, \dots, \epsilon_r) = (\dots (c_{\lambda_1}^{\gamma_1}, c_{\lambda_2}^{\gamma_2}), \dots, c_{\lambda_E}^{\gamma_E})$$

where  $\gamma_i = 1$  if  $\eta_{\lambda_i} > 0$  and  $\gamma_i = -1$  if  $\eta_{\lambda_i} < 0$ .

Since an element of the set  $\Sigma$  is such that at least one  $\epsilon_j \neq 0$  for  $1 \leq j \leq n_{i-1}$ , it follows from (3.1), (3.2), (3.8), and (3.9) and Definition 2.1-I that (i)  $(c_{\lambda_1}^{\gamma_1}, c_{\lambda_2}^{\gamma_2}) \neq 1$  in  $G$ , and (ii) any generator  $c_k$  which is in the set,

$\{c_{\lambda_2}, c_{\lambda_3}, \dots, c_{\lambda_E}\}$ , and is of the same type as  $c_{\lambda_1}$  is also  $\leq c_{\lambda_1}$ . Furthermore by Definitions 2.1 and 2.2, equations (3.6) through (3.10), and the inequalities (3.4), we find that  $c(i; \epsilon_1, \epsilon_2, \dots, \epsilon_r)$  is indeed a quasi-G-simple commutator.

Conversely, given any quasi-G-simple commutator  $c = (\dots (c_{\lambda_1}^{\gamma_1}, c_{\lambda_2}^{\gamma_2}), \dots, c_{\lambda_E}^{\gamma_E})$  we easily find a unique

$$(3.12) \quad t(c) = t_i(\epsilon_1, \epsilon_2, \dots, \epsilon_r)$$

so that (3.11) holds for the integers  $i, \epsilon_1, \epsilon_2, \dots, \epsilon_r$  in (3.12). We do this by choosing  $i$  so that  $c_{\lambda_1}$  is of  $\beta_i$ -type and by reversing the above procedure for finding  $\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \dots, \lambda_E$  as functions of  $\epsilon_1, \epsilon_2, \dots, \epsilon_r$ . Hence by Definitions 2.1 and 2.2, it is clear that we must be led to a unique member of the set  $\Sigma$ .

Next we require an ordering of the quasi-G-simple commutators. We note that the G-simple basic commutators are ordered by the ordering for basic commutators in Definition 2.1-I.

We shall call the quasi-G-simple commutators

$$d_1 = (\dots (c_{i_1}^{\epsilon_1}, c_{i_2}^{\epsilon_2}), \dots, c_{i_\theta}^{\epsilon_\theta}) \quad \text{and} \quad d_2 = (\dots (c_{j_1}^{\delta_1}, c_{j_2}^{\delta_2}), \dots, c_{j_r}^{\delta_r})$$

equivalent if and only if (i)  $\theta = r$  and (ii)  $i_k = j_k$  for  $1 \leq k \leq \theta$ . This clearly constitutes an equivalence relation so that the quasi-G-simple commutators are broken up into disjoint equivalence classes. In each class  $S_\rho$ , pick out  $c_\rho \in S_\rho$  where  $c_\rho$  is the G-simple basic commutator in  $S_\rho$ . We will say

$$(3.13) \quad S_{\rho_1} < S_{\rho_2}$$

if and only if  $\rho_1 \neq \rho_2$  and  $c_{\rho_1} < c_{\rho_2}$ . Any quasi-G-simple commutator in a given class follows all those in earlier classes in the ordering (3.13). Those quasi-G-simple commutators in the same class are ordered arbitrarily with respect to each other. Quasi-G-simple commutators will always be numbered so that they are ordered by their subscripts.

In order to establish that the quasi-G-simple commutators generate  $G'$  freely, we need the following preliminary lemma:

**Lemma 3.4.** Consider the quasi-G-simple commutator  $c = (\dots (c_{\lambda_1}^{\gamma_1}, c_{\lambda_2}^{\gamma_2}), \dots, c_{\lambda_E}^{\gamma_E})$ .

Then

$$(3.14) \quad t(c) = w_1 c^{-1} w_2$$

where  $w_1$  and  $w_2$  are either both 1 or they are in the subgroup generated by those quasi-G-simple commutators which are in classes earlier than  $c$  in the ordering (3.13).

**Proof.** We observe that it clearly suffices to prove this lemma for the case in which all  $\gamma_i$  ( $1 \leq i \leq E$ ) are positive. For suppose some  $\gamma_i = -1$ . Then we may replace the generator  $c_{\lambda_i}$  by  $d_{\lambda_i} = c_{\lambda_i}^{-1}$  and work with this set of generators. (Note that this is justified by virtue of condition (d) in Definition 2.2.) Thus without lack of generality, we assume that  $c$  is  $G$ -simple.

Suppose that  $j(r)$  is such that  $c_{\lambda_r}$  is of  $\beta_{j(r)}$ -type where  $1 \leq r \leq E$ . We shall treat the following three cases:

- I.  $j(r) < j(1)$  for  $2 \leq r \leq E$ ,
- II.  $j(r) \leq j(1)$  for  $2 \leq r \leq E$ ,
- III.  $j(r) > j(1)$  for some  $r$  which is  $> 2$  but  $\leq E$ .

**Case I.** Let us first analyze Case I by induction on  $E$ . For  $E = 2$ , we easily find by our 1-1 correspondence that

$$t(c) = c_{\lambda_2}^{-1} c_{\lambda_1}^{-1} c_{\lambda_2} c_{\lambda_1} = c^{-1}.$$

To proceed we then make the induction hypothesis that the lemma holds in the present Case I for  $2 \leq E < \bar{E}$  so that  $w_1$  and  $w_2$  have the following property  $\mathcal{Q}$ .

**Property  $\mathcal{Q}$ .**  $w_1$  and  $w_2$  are either both 1 or are in the subgroup generated by those  $G$ -simple basic commutators of the form  $d = (\cdots (c_{\rho_1}, c_{\rho_2}), \cdots, c_{\rho_\theta})$  which are such that (i)  $\{\rho_1, \rho_2, \cdots, \rho_\theta\}$  is a proper subset of  $\{\lambda_1, \lambda_2, \cdots, \lambda_E\}$ , (ii)  $\rho_\theta \leq \lambda_E$  and (iii) if  $j(E) < j(1)$ ,  $\rho_1$  must  $= \lambda_1$ . (By Definition 2.1-I, every such  $d$  is clearly  $< c$ .)

Having made our hypothesis and noting that property  $\mathcal{Q}$  holds trivially for  $E = 2$ , we are ready to consider  $E = \bar{E}$ . Our 1-1 correspondence yields now

$$\begin{aligned} (t(c))^{-1} &= c_{\lambda_1}^{-1} \left[ \prod_{k=0}^{E-2} (c_{\lambda_{E-k}})^{-1} \right] c_{\lambda_1} \left[ \prod_{k=0}^{E-2} c_{\lambda_{2+k}} \right] \\ &= (c_{\lambda_1}, c_{\lambda_E}) c_{\lambda_E}^{-1} (t(c^L))^{-1} c_{\lambda_E}. \end{aligned}$$

By application of the induction hypothesis and of the trivial identity

$$(3.15) \quad b^{-1} \left( \prod_{i=1}^l a_i^{\epsilon_i} \right) b = \prod_{i=1}^l [a_i, (a_i, b)]^{\epsilon_i}$$

and by virtue of Definitions 2.1 and 2.1-I, we then can express  $c$  in the form

(3.14) so that  $w_1$  and  $w_2$  have Property  $\mathcal{Q}$ .

Having carried out the desired proof for Case I, we are now ready to go to

**Case II.** Our 1-1 correspondence now expresses  $t(c)$  as

$$(3.16) \quad (t(c))^{-1} = (c_{\lambda_1} u)^{-1} \left( \prod_{k=0}^{\mu-2} c_{\lambda_{\mu-k}}^{-1} \right) (c_{\lambda_1} u) \left( \prod_{k=0}^{\mu-2} c_{\lambda_{2+k}} \right)$$

so that (i)  $(\prod_{k=0}^{\mu-2} c_{\lambda_{2+k}})$  is the product of those generators in the set  $\Gamma = \{c_{\lambda_2}, c_{\lambda_3}, \dots, c_{\lambda_E}\}$  which are such that  $j(r) < j(1)$  for  $2 \leq r \leq \mu$ ,

(ii)  $u = 1$  if  $\Gamma$  does not contain generators in the class  $j(1)$ , but is the product  $u = \prod_{k=1}^{E-\mu} c_{\lambda_{\mu+k}}$  of those generators in  $\Gamma$  which are in class  $j(1)$  if there are such generators. We note from the hypothesis of this case that  $\Gamma$  does not contain generators in classes  $\beta_m$  where  $m > j(1)$ . Proceeding by induction on  $E - \mu$ , we shall now prove the truth of (3.14) in Case II so that  $w_1$  and  $w_2$  have property  $\mathcal{Q}$ . For  $E - \mu = 0$  we have already done so in Case I. Suppose then that we have shown the desired conclusion for  $\mu \leq E < \bar{E}$ . We consider  $E = \bar{E}$  next and rewrite (3.16) as

$$\begin{aligned} (t(c))^{-1} &= \left\{ c_{\lambda_E}^{-1} \left[ (c_{\lambda_1} u c_{\lambda_E}^{-1})^{-1} \left[ \prod_{k=0}^{\mu-2} (c_{\lambda_{\mu-k}})^{-1} \right] (c_{\lambda_1} u c_{\lambda_E}^{-1}) \left[ \prod_{k=0}^{\mu-2} c_{\lambda_{2+k}} \right] \right] c_{\lambda_E} \right\} \\ &\quad \cdot \left\{ c_{\lambda_E}, \prod_{k=0}^{\mu-2} c_{\lambda_{2+k}} \right\} \\ &= (c_{\lambda_E}^{-1} t(c^L)^{-1} c_{\lambda_E}) \left( c_{\lambda_E}, \prod_{k=0}^{\mu-2} c_{\lambda_{2+k}} \right). \end{aligned}$$

We now apply the induction hypothesis to  $t(c^L)$ , and we make use of (3.15) to rewrite  $c_{\lambda_E}^{-1} (t(c^L))^{-1} c_{\lambda_E}$  and then express it as a product of  $G$ -simple basic commutators by Lemma 4.5-I. (We note that in I the generators were assumed to have prime order, but the proof of this lemma goes through exactly the way it stands in our case where the generator  $c_j$  either has  $O(c_j) = a_j$  or  $\infty$ .) We also find by repeated reference to the well-known identity  $(a, bc) = (a, c)(a, b)((a, b), c)$  and to (3.15) that  $(c_{\lambda_E}, \prod_{k=0}^{\mu-2} c_{\lambda_{2+k}})$  is a word in commutators of the form

$$(\dots((c_{\lambda_E}, c_{\eta_1}), c_{\eta_2}), \dots, c_{\eta_\phi}),$$

where  $\eta_1, \eta_2, \dots, \eta_\phi$  is a subsequence of  $\lambda_2 \leq \lambda_3 \leq \dots \leq \lambda_\mu$ . It is clear by Definitions 2.1-I and 2.1 that this procedure must give us (3.14) once again so that  $w_1$  and  $w_2$  have property  $\mathcal{Q}$ .

Having proven the lemma for Cases I and II, we now complete the proof by considering

Case III. Our 1-1 correspondence gives us  $(t(c))^{-1} = \alpha^{-1} \Omega \alpha$  for this final case, where  $\Omega$  is given by the right-hand side of (3.16) and  $\alpha$  is the product,  $\alpha = \prod_{k=E+1}^E \sim c_{\lambda_k}$ , of those elements of  $\Gamma$  which are in classes  $\beta_m$  such that  $m > j(1)$ . We then express  $\Omega$  as in Case II and apply the identity (3.15) repeatedly.



Recalling Definitions 2.1-I and 2.1 we now verify the truth of our lemma also for this last case.

At this point we are ready to apply Lemma 3.4 and thus proceed to the

**Proof of Theorem 2.1.** Let  $d_1, d_2, \dots, d_n, \dots$  be the quasi- $G$ -simple commutators ordered in the manner described after inequality (3.13). Let  $t^{(1)}, t^{(2)}, \dots, t^{(n)}, \dots$  be the corresponding generators of the set  $\Sigma$  found by (3.12). Taking  $r = 1, 2, \dots, n, \dots$  we conclude by (3.14) that  $d_1, d_2, \dots, d_n, \dots$  generate the same group as the set  $\Sigma$ . To show that  $d_1, d_2, \dots, d_n, \dots$  generate  $G'$  freely, let us suppose that there were a nontrivial relation

$$R = R(d_{\rho_1}, d_{\rho_2}, \dots, d_{\rho_e}) = 1$$

among the quasi- $G$ -simple commutators. Let  $M$  be the maximum among  $\rho_1, \rho_2, \dots, \rho_e$ . We note that

$$\Lambda = \{t^{(1)}, t^{(2)}, \dots, t^{(M)}\}$$

is a subset of the set,  $\Sigma$ , of free generators. Hence the elements of  $\Lambda$  are free generators of the group which they generate. But this implies that  $d_1, d_2, \dots, d_M$  are free generators according to the well-known Theorem 3.1, below, a fact which contradicts the relation  $R = 1$ . Therefore we have shown that the quasi- $G$ -simple commutators generate  $G'$  freely.

**Theorem 3.1** ([5, p. 110] or [4, p. 109]). *If a free group has  $q < \infty$  free generators, then any  $q$  generators are free generators.*

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