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ideal included in union of prime ideals

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In the following R is a commutative ring with unity.

Proposition 1. *Let I be an ideal of the ring R and P_1, P_2, \dots, P_n be prime ideals of R . If $I \not\subseteq P_i$, for all i , then $I \not\subseteq \cup P_i$.*

Proof. We will prove by induction on n . For $n = 1$ the proof is trivial. Assume now that the result is true for $n - 1$. That implies the existence, for each i , of an element s_i such that $s_i \in I$ and $s_i \notin \bigcup_{j \neq i} P_j$. If for some i , $s_i \notin P_i$ then we are done. Thus, we may consider only the case $s_i \in P_i$, for all i .

Let $a_i = r_1 \dots r_{i-1} r_{i+1} \dots r_n$. Since P_i is prime then $a_i \notin P_i$, for all i . Moreover, for $j \neq i$, the element $a_i \in P_j$. Consider the element $a = \sum a_j \in I$. Since $a_i = a - \sum_{j \neq i} a_j$ and $\sum_{j \neq i} a_j \in P_i$, it follows that $a \notin P_i$, otherwise $a_i \in P_i$, contradiction. The existence of the element a proves the proposition. \square

Corollary 1. *Let I be an ideal of the ring R and P_1, P_2, \dots, P_n be prime ideals of R . If $I \subseteq \cup P_i$, then $I \subseteq P_i$, for some i .*