Show trial – Key Points

Stalin purge of the ‘old Bolsheviks’ within the communist party

Stalin’s ambition of complete dominance over soviet society

Stalin’s broader purge of potential opponents & dissidents i.e red army

Creation of the all-powerful NKVD 1934)

Manipulation of soviet society through propaganda and fear

Scapegoating for failures of collectivisation & five – year plans

Internal Effects

* Terrifed the population into submission to stalin & communist party
* Established the NKVD as the most powerful people organisation in the USSR
* Convinced many societs that there were conspiracies against the state & communism
* Distracted form some of the failures of the five year plans
* Distracted the attention away form the fallout of collectivisation & famine
* Established stalins absolute dictatorship of Party & society

International Impression :

* Many but not all international observers were convinced by the legitimacy of the trial
* Dispayed the personal power of stalin to foreigners
* Used as much to warn off foregn as much punishing internal dissent

What was the impact of the show trials on the USSR in the 1930’s :  
The impact of the show trials on the USSR were hugely significant it effected multiple parts of life in the USSR. It affected the leaders of the USSR it led to the increasing power of the NKVD , and the level of fear present.

The show trials at its core amplified the leadership of Stalin. Stalin used the trials to remove any threats to his power, including those who helped him replace Stalin. Zimonev and Kamonev to fomer close allies of Stalin admitted in open trial how they planned to kill Stalin. Stalin even used the show trial to remove the former leader of the NKVD who Stalin saw as getting to powerful . The NKVD also used torture and fear tactics in order to change the mind of the Soviet people

The red army was severly effected by the show trials. In a trial the Red Army was striped of most of its high command , and many officers were removed form their positions due to the risk of them not being loyal to Stalin. This severely affected their ablity to preform their duties. This action backfired on Stalin when I came to world war 2 as the Red army was not able to deal with the pressures of war.

The show trials allowed Stalin to assign blame other then him to the failure of the 5 year plans and collectivization. Due to the trials public nature Stalin could convince the soviet people that the supposed plots were the reasons for the failure of his policies.

Stalin used the show trials to remove threats to his power, both in the communist party aswell as in the Red Army, this allowed him to consolidate power. He also used the trials to deal with the controversies of his failed policies

24/24

10/16

Sample Answer

The 1930’s and the show trials had a vital impact on the USSR. It was a period in which stalin began a policy known as the great terror. Centeral to this policy would be the show trials or the Moscow trials of 1936-1938. The great terror and show trials in particular would have a wide ranging and profound effect on the USSR

Point !1

One of the main impacts of the show trials was that it increased the level of political control and power that Stalin had. One of the main reasons Stalin had for using the trials was to eliminate his political opponents. He achieved this with great success. 10 out of the 15 Bolshevik government of 1917 died in the show trials. Only two, Stalin Trotsky ( murdered 1940) were still alive in 1938. Key men like Kamenev and Zinoviev who Stalin had defeated in the struggle had been ruthlessly eliminated.

P2

The Red Army were also purged during the show trials. Many officers had been appointed by Trotsky during the Civil War. Stalin believed that to prevent a military takeover, officers whose loyalty was in question needed to be removed. Chief of General staff, Marshal Tukhacevsky and other senior officers were tried for plotting with Germany. In all 60% of all officers or 35,000 men were shot. The purges of the political opponents and the army combined ensure stalin was now pointed to set up a totalitarian system og government which would impact greatly on the USSR at the beginning of World War 2

P3

The progaganda achine benefited form the show trials and in turn impacted profoundly on S0viet society. The trials were cleverly used to try those Stalin declared were to blame for any failures in the collectivisation and industrial polices. This was particulary true in the Third Show trial of 1938 where one of the accuionts against the defendants was wrecking and sabotage to weaken the econonomy. Newspapers also speasd the word that may high ranking Communists were plotting with forgein powers to over throw the communist system, while other were conspiring to kill stalin. As a result weeding out traitorsacted as justifcaation for Great Terror. Interestingly this had the impact of creating unity among Russians against a common enemy. Consequently throughout the trials the cult of Personality or Culr of leader that Stalin hoped to create