“Non”Violent Gandhi . . . ?

Hi, Everyone! The words Gandhi and nonviolence are practically synonymous in the world today. And *yet* very early on in my research I came across some lesser known *very*illuminating facts.

Since 1908-9 Gandhi was vociferous in denouncing the revolutionaries for their ‘violence’ and much more. But only a short time before, Gandhi’s own deeds reveal what was sauce for the goose was, indeed, not sauce for the gander.

Before going any further, I shall give one of Gandhi’s own quotes from his autobiography which highlight his avowed precept of nonviolence.

“I make no distinction, from the point of view of *ahimsa*(nonviolence) between combatants and non-combatants. He who volunteers to serve a band of dacoits, by working as their carrier, or their watchman while they are about their business, or their nurse when they are wounded, is as much guilty of dacoity as the dacoit themselves. In the same way those who confine themselves to attending to the wounded in battle cannot be absolved from the guilt of war.”

This would lead one to believe that nonviolent Gandhi would stay far away indeed from war or any connection to it. One would be wrong!

To quote from *Gandhi: Behind the Mask of Divinity*, by G. B. Singh (page 63):

“The Life and Death of Mahatma Gandhi, by Robert Payne (1969)

‘In his article in *Indian Opinion* Gandhi called upon the Indians to fight on the side of the British. He pointed out that the Europeans had always distrusted the fighting prowess of the Indians in Natal; at the first sign of danger they would desert their posts and make their way back to India. “We cannot meet this charge with a written rejoinder,” he wrote. “There is but one way to disproving it —the way of action.” He asked the Indians to join the Volunteer Corps. They should not be afraid of war. Wars are relatively harmless.’”

· Note that Gandhi claims wars are harmless . . . !

· Note that despite his above mentioned precept, he is clamoring that he and the Indians be enrolled in the British army.

· The British can certainly be considered more ‘dacoits’ than ‘soldiers’ in the manner in which they ruthlessly crushed the Zulu rebellion, victimizing women, children, and the elderly.

In case anyone is willing to give Gandhi latitude for what he means by ‘Volunteer Corps,’ read the excerpts from his article “Indians volunteers” published in his *Indian Opinion*, June 23, 1906 (*ibid*; page 100).

“The Stretcher-Bearer Corps is to last only a few days. Its work will be only to carry the wounded, and it will be disbanded when such work is no longer necessary. These men are not allowed to bear arms. The move for a Volunteer Corps is quite different and much more important. That Corps will be a permanent body; its members will be issued weapons, and they will receive military training every year at stated times.”

· Gandhi is actively advocating the bearing of weapons and military training over belonging to the Stretcher-Bearer Corps . . . !

· By his above mentioned precept, even belonging to a Stretcher-Bearer Corps ought to be a no-no for his precept of nonviolence.

Unfortunately for Gandhi, the Stretcher-Bears Corps is where he and his troop were finally enrolled despite his seven months of appeals to bear arms.

This isn't the only instance of Gandhi's approval—no, actual promotion—of violence. He did it again and yet again!

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Anurupa
Mahatma Gandhi Facts: Gandhi Revealed