Rosette Goldstein was a small child in France when the Nazis took away her father, aunt and uncle and two cousins. She was saved by farmers but her family members perished in the Holocaust.

They were among the 76,000 French Jews who were transported by the French National Railroad to the German border. German trains then took them to concentration camps.

Goldstein, 72, of West Boca Raton, said her father David Adler was sent to Auschwitz, then to Buchenwald and finally to its sub-camp, Langenstein before going on a death march. He was shot and killed 10 days before he would have been liberated, she said. The other members of her family were murdered in Auschwitz, Goldstein said.

Recently, the Shoah Memorial of Paris, the oldest and largest Holocaust documentation center in Europe, announced in a statement that it would join with Florida's Task Force on Holocaust Education in a three-year program to educate the state's public school teachers about the history of the Holocaust.

The statement said a grant from SNCF America, the U.S. subsidiary of the French National Railroad, would fund the program, which would in turn fund projects at the Florida Holocaust Task Force’s nine educational sites, three of which are located in South Florida. They are the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center in Hollywood, the Center for Holocaust and Human Rights Education at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton and the University of Miami.

The announcement upset and angered Goldstein. "As a survivor, I'm appalled that a company like this is going to have a say in our children's education," she said.

"The French railroad took people to the camps. They say that they were coerced. They weren't coerced, they collaborated," Goldstein said. "They knew where these people were going. They were paid for regular trains; they put [the deportees] in cattle cars."

The French railroad was paid for each person and the number of kilometers each was transported, she added.

"I know that my father suffered greatly," Goldstein said. "I think it's time for them to come clean, apologize in the right way and pay reparations," said Goldstein, who is one
of 600 survivors or family members seeking redress from the French National Railroad in court.

She thinks the company is funding the Holocaust education program to clean up its public image so that it can win lucrative high speed rail contracts in the United States.

Linda Medvin, chairperson of the Holocaust Task Force, defended the program. "This is an education initiative and an educational opportunity," she said. "This is just an opportunity to learn more about another piece of the Holocaust.

"We are trying to move forward to educate future generations," Medvin said. "This is 2012 almost. We have to move on, we have to go on to the future and educate for the future."

"Holocaust education should not depend on foreign money," especially money from a company that transported Jews to their deaths, said Rita Hofrichter, a Task Force member and Holocaust survivor who is vice president of the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center in Hollywood. "I was shocked when I found out about it," she said.

Hofrichter said she is worried that the program will teach the French company's point of view about the Holocaust. "Are they entitled, with their history, to teach our children?" she asked.

Hofrichter said she and many Holocaust Task Force members didn't know about the program until they were notified in an Aug. 23 email. "It shouldn't have been a secret. If this was under consideration, the task force members should have known right away," she said. "We have not been given any details of it. There are so many questions and there are very few answers, so far."

She said she hopes to learn more when the Task Force meets from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sept. 22 at Nova Southeastern University's Health Professions Building on the Davie campus.

Alan Berger, Raddock Family Eminent Scholar for Holocaust Studies at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton and a member of the Holocaust Task Force, said he was not aware of the Shoah Memorial program until he received the email announcing it on Aug. 23.

"It's a type of blood money because they're trying to make amends," Berger said. But as long as people know about the French National Railroad's past, he said, "I think we can move forward but move forward with eyes open."

Berger said he would be in favor of the program if there would be "decent" research and the effort would contribute to further knowledge of the Holocaust.
But the Holocaust Task Force should reject the funding, he said, "if there are any strings attached," such as some topics being off-limits or some research projects not receiving funds.

"There are problems when sources of money [for Holocaust education] are drying up," he said.